DR. NISHA SHASTRY
CHILD OF TWO WORLDS
BOOK 1 OF THE SAGA UNTOLD

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DR. NISHA SHASTRY

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Child of Two Worlds - Book 1 of The Saga Untold
Nisha Shastry

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# Preface

This is a small attempt to reach out to the scientific temper of young minds. The idea behind this Trilogy is to create interest amongst younger minds to think beyond the current limitations.

The book attempts to showcase two major points: first that a small fry, with the power of self-belief, could take on the mightiest of creatures and therefore, no problem is big enough that one cannot solve. Anything and everything can be achieved. Second is that there could be technologies and solutions beyond the limitations.

I have heard a lot that it would be difficult to breach the speed of light. Hence this is an attempt to showcase the ideas as to how such a scientific feat could be achieved more so naively but poignantly. This book also attempts to intertwine philosophical discussions with scientific possibilities merged in an interesting story of the protagonist Dharma and his journey to a parallel universe.

Author

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# Acknowledgement

Writing a fictional story that, too, science fiction, was long since in my mind. The idea was to ensure that our young minds start thinking about the future of humanity and draw inspiration. They say what we think is what we become. Scientific temper and dreams had brought humanity this far and would take us much beyond.

Therefore, I started with this attempt but never contemplated that writing a novel would be so difficult. Many a time, I thought of leaving it in between, but then the encouragement of friends and family such as my mother, Ms Asha Sharma, my father, Mr MK Sharma and above all, my sister Chetana and my darling *jiju* Mr Pankaj Sharma had never let my spirit die. I cannot thank them enough for their constant motivation and support.

Also, I must thank the publisher White Falcon whose great team has helped shape the content so well. The professional team helped me not only in putting my thoughts in a rightful manner but helping me with each stage of the work.

Last, my friends, who helped me streamline my thoughts, gave perspectives of scientific theories and ensured in the utopian world that I was planning to create, I didn't trample the basic physics.

***

# Prologue

'The legend is a powerful weapon. Maybe the most potent one.' Sona's—the seven-dimensional demigod—last words were still fresh in the mind of Dharma. He couldn't believe what he had experienced in such a short period—shoved to a parallel universe, beamed from one place to another, overwhelmed by incomprehensible super-luminal travel and, on top of it, a rendezvous with a seven-dimensional being. But the strangest of all, he, a lowly human, was expected to take on extremely mighty beings and emancipate Eritrea.

The events unfolded again while he was in a trance travelling to embrace his destiny. And some voice shouting inside him, 'You are the son of God—The Child of two Worlds—you can do anything. …'

**10th April 2079: Planet Earth–Country, India**

Dharma could not believe what he was hearing. For the past many years, he had thought that his real parents were Prof. Gayatri and Major General Tej Pratap. He had never thought he would learn in his mid-twenties that they were not his biological parents.

As destiny would have had, he was receiving the biggest shock of his life on the day when he had successfully cleared the toughest of exams and joined the World's Space Marshall Guild as Fleet Lieutenant. To be part of the World's Space Marshall Guild was a dream of many, but only a few could ever make it past the poll. For Dharma, the best part was that not only by displaying exemplary physical and mental strengths, he had been selected for the coveted Guild, but he was regarded as a prodigy. Dharma alone could answer the queries on M-theory and eleven-dimensional space. He was the one who solved the mathematical equations who no-one

could even attempt. Dharma's answers were now the talk of the town in the scientific community.

This earned Dharma a direct place in the prodigious spacecraft 'MV Cerestor' which had a cutting-edge propeller—the space strain fuel propeller made of the compound Ceres-dig that allowed the ship to reach a max speed of 0.15 C, i.e., 15% of light speed. This was the fastest spaceship, a masterpiece and a big leap in space exploration by humans. 'Ceres-dig' was a material recently found on asteroid Ceres that allowed the generation of a huge amount of energy from the nuclear fusion of an extremely small quantity of material Ceres-dig. This was a game-changer. Earth to Mars now was a couple of hours journey, and Alpha Centauri, the nearest stellar system in around twenty-eight years. But now, these were distant dreams for Dharma.

'Mother, say this is a lie …' Dharma pleaded.

'Nope, my son. Maybe I could say so.' Gayatri, a centenarian, looked no more than a lady in her mid-thirties. Given the advancement of biotechnology, humans have overcome the barriers of ageing to a large extent.

Gayatri continued sombrely, 'You are not my biological child, though you will remain my son forever.' She burst into tears.

'We have promised to deliver you back to your world once the time is right, and I am afraid you must honour our words.' Major Tej Pratap said in a baritone. He was also a centenarian though his toned muscular body was fit enough to be the envy of any youth.

The mystery man, who now seemed like pure evil to Dharma, was standing still at some distance; his silhouette looked as if some dark soldier of Satan had come to take Dharma away from his parents—his life.

'We should leave, my Lord. We have limited time in hand,' the mystery man said with full humility and respect. He was a tall man draped completely in black attire. His oval face had a sparkling gem shimmering at the forehead.

'Why is he calling me his lord? What is this? I can't understand.' Dharma was confused and was looking for answers. He suddenly couldn't leave everything behind and go without even understanding what was going on.

Dharma's life changed in the past thirty minutes. He wondered how happy and ecstatic he was explaining his plans to be the Commander-in-Chief of 'MV Cerestor when a mystery man arrived at their doorstep. This stranger's arrival had given such misery which no event ever had, and the thing most hurtful to Dharma was that his own parents in their own

backyard were playing ball with this stranger. It was not the stranger but his parents who had enjoined him to leave and go with this outsider to some other world through a portal.

'You are their Lord; they worship you like God. You are the only saviour they have. Their world is in danger of getting usurped by the evil power of Xor, and you are the one who must liberate them.' Tej Pratap intervened in a composed voice. His baritone suited him. He was the Major General of the Indian army and, at present, was in the army town. This was a peace posting, and thus his family was with him.

'How can I lead them? I don't know them. I am not an expert in any war tactics. I am no one. I don't even understand their advanced technologies.' Dharma was even more confused.

'My Lord, I will explain everything during our journey. You indeed are the most powerful leader, and our holy Bof prophesizes that now is the time for you to come and take your rightful position.' The mystery man intervened.

'What are you talking about? Every word is a puzzle unto itself. If I go with you, will I ever come back here? I will lose my parents, family, friends, and everything I have.' Dharma pleaded. Now that it had dawned upon him that he might have to leave this world. He would literally be dead for this world.

'My Lord, this is a secret identity for you. You are well protected here. You will surely return to this world if you have any danger or once you think the time is right for you to leave your own world and people. The portal is under your command and control. But at this moment, you must display leadership and take control of the situation to liberate Eritrea from Xorian occupation.' Mystery man supplicated in a purposeful tone. He was in a steaming hurry.

'My son, Zoro is correct.' Gayatri put her hands on Dharma's shoulders to console him. Though she was aware that nothing could control the tsunami of emotions erupting inside her little kid. Gayatri had to intervene and ensure Dharma was finally apprised of the truth.

'Now is the time; I should let you know your true identity.' Gayatri said with a heavy voice.

'You are aware that many years ago, I was an astrophysicist who used to work in Switzerland in the ROOL's Headquarters,' Gayatri continued. Research on Outer Life (ROOL) was funded by many nations to research alien life and their world.

'ROOL was in those days under the command of Prof. Jaber, and I was directly working with him. It was at that time I received an alien signal for the first time,' Gayatri continued.

'And that's when I was contacted by Zoro. Initially, I was not sure what kind of signals we were receiving, but soon we started receiving signals at frequencies that were comprehensible for us.'

'That's because we wanted to establish contact. After initial exchanges, we learnt what kind of species you are, and Professor Boro, my boss, deciphered your language easily. Thus, we could message you at your frequencies and language,' Zoro intervened. His voice was strange, a different stammer that Dharma had never heard. For the first time, he noticed that this alien creature could not speak properly. He was putting a lot of effort into speaking. Not fluent in English was one thing, but not being accustomed to speaking was another. Dharma wondered what such life could be.

'Yes. We were surprised that the alien could understand us so well. But soon, our exchanges ensured that we developed trust for each other. Though it was at this time, Zoro made a strange request. 'He wanted to meet us in person but did not want us to let this fact known to the general populace,' Gayatri said.

'So, you never told anyone about the visit of an alien to our world.' Dharma questioned.

'No. Only Prof. Jaber and I knew about it. Soon Zoro paid us a visit.' Gayatri's monologue continued. 'Zoro beamed himself directly in my lab. That was the most surprising and exciting time for me. I had seen an alien life in person. Zoro had a strange incubator with a sleeping baby.'

'Zoro came not in a spaceship but just beamed in your lab with a baby.' Dharma exclaimed in a tone of disbelief.

'We could beam living and non-living items till one Heaur at one Tylight speed.' Zoro intervened to quell the conerns of Dharma.

'Heaur?? And Tylight speed? Are we speaking English here?' Dharma said, though his cynicism was apparently visible.

Zoro was not trained to pick such hidden sarcasm, and he took it upon himself to answer the query of his Lord, 'Oh son of God, My Lord, Heaur is a distance equivalent to around one and half trillion kilometres, and one Tylight speed could be related to a speed almost two thousand five hundred times light speed.'

'What? So, you could beam anything living or inanimate at almost twenty-five hundred times light speed.' Dharma was full of sarcasm. Surely

this alien did not know about elementary physics. Nothing can travel faster than light and not twenty-five hundred times light speed.

'Yes, my lord,' Zoro responded.

'Surely you have not heard of Einstein,' Dharma waggishly riposted.

'Cut it, Dharma. Zoro is not bluffing. He could travel at those speeds. In fact, whatever little we have learnt about Muverse, Zoro and his fellow being have devised travelling modes ranging from Tylight speed to Lauy speed from twenty-five hundred times light speed to one and half million times,' Gayatri responded in between.

Dharam wanted to counter, but he thought this was not the time to discuss physics. Einstein was relevant only in this universe; already, it seemed that Zoro was from a different universe, called 'Muverse'. More so, Dharma was more concerned about this alien who was here to take him away from his parents.

'You will learn about these technologies shortly, my Lord. Professor Boro would satiate your queries,' Zoro said. Though it was visible that he could only speak with much difficulty. As if to speak, he had to make a special effort.

Dharma wanted to understand Prof. Boro, but he decided not to ask those questions which were not relevant now. Gayatri's voice intervened with Dharma's thought process.

'So, I was saying that Zoro had a baby, and he, without wasting any time, briefed Prof. Jaber and me about his world and took a promise that whenever he comes over, I will hand over this baby back to him.' Gayatri continued.

'Oh. And that baby was me,' Dharma concluded in a trembling voice.

'Yes, my son. Zoro explained to me that he is from a planet called Eritrea, which is currently under the siege of foreign occupation by Xor. Zoro told me upon my enquiry that this planet Eritrea is in a different parallel universe which they call Muverse.'

'Interestingly, Mom. You didn't receive the signals from an alien life from a nearby solar system or galaxy but from a parallel universe.' Dharma was perplexed. His statement was more rhetorical than anything.

'Yes. It was puzzling. More so, Zoro was constantly requesting it to keep secret. He requested I take this baby and bring him up on Earth. I was confused, but Zoro insisted that as per Bof their holy book, it is prophesized that their leader will have to be protected like this, and his bringing up here only can equip him to take on the mighty Xorians.'

'That's true, my lord. Bof has exactly predicted this. And now I am here to take you back because, as per Bof, the time has come. You must now emancipate Eritrea. Come with me, my Lord. We have limited time in hand.' Zoro said in a hoarse voice. Although every word uttered by Zoro felt like raucous cries to Dharma.

Gayatri could feel what Dharma was going through. She decided to continue with her monologue, 'It was a tough decision, but Zoro insisted, and somehow, I couldn't say no to him. He left at that time but gave me a 'vector' through which he could detect me from his world. I brought you up as my own child. I even left the job to ensure you can be reared well in this world, Dharma. Now after so many years, Zoro has returned to take you with him, and unfortunately, my child, you have to …' Gayatri burst into tears.

'You always were special, my dear child. You have done such extraordinary things with such ease that generally is impossible for the average human to do. You have amazing mental and physical capabilities.' Tej Pratap said in a heavy voice.

'My Lord, now we must leave. We cannot spend much time here. The time is running out. Sire, we must leave now.' Zoro pleaded with Dharma.

Boom! …

Suddenly a big explosion happened. As if many bombs had exploded or multiple missiles had hit the place. There were fumes and small mushrooming clouds of airburst, which could be seen out of the window of the 14th-floor apartment.

'What is this …?' Tej Pratap immediately enquired through the transponder strapped on his wrist. Soon an image appeared in the thin air.

'Sir, there is a terrorist attack in our town.' Shouted the voice of the image on the other side of the device.

'How dare them. These terrorists now have the courage to assault the secure colony of the Military Command. It is their biggest mistake, the price of which is their life.' Commanded Tej Pratap and touched the device collapsing the image.

'I can't leave you like this, Mom and Dad. We have to see you to safety.' Dharma said with a hardened voice.

'My Lord, we must leave. We now have no time to waste,' The mystery man Zoro said.

'I can't leave my parents like this.' Dharma was clear.

'You may forgive me for this …' Zoro said with full penitence. He straightened his arm, and from a thin blaster not apparently visible implanted in the subdermal skin of his right-hand wrist, a beam was shot and hit Dharma.

Dharma became unconscious immediately.

'My Lady, thanks for your support. I wish I could help you in this terrible situation, but I must leave.' Zoro thanked Gayatri.

'Take care of my son.' Gayatri requested, but it was subdued as there was another blast inside their room.

Zoro lifted Dharma and gave a mental command. Both Zoro and Dharma were beamed out. Maybe the spaceship floating somewhere in deep space had called them in.

Tej Pratap took out a blanket and draped Gayatri in it as she had caught fire due to the blast. The entire room now had engulfed in fire.

***

## CHAPTER 1

# The Journey

Dharma opened his eyes and found himself in a mystic world. He was levitating in midair, and some strange-looking instruments were around him. He was not sure what he was feeling. He had a kind of tingling feeling, but he was not sure whether it was due to this artificial levitation or whether there was anti-gravity. He could see that a few droids were around him, and he felt as if one of the robots gave some kind of mental command, and Dharma was made to land on his feet mysteriously. It was as if someone had lifted him in his arms and made him stand on his feet. Dharma could walk around easily, and it meant that there was some kind of artificial gravity around.

Soon the mirror faded away at some distance from him, and he could see Zoro approaching him. Once Zoro crossed that area, the mirror automatically appeared again. Zoro was wearing the same clothing—the black robe with a shimmering gem on his forehead. His oval face wore a strange expression, which may be an admixture of elation and guilt.

'How are you feeling, my Lord?' Asked Zoro. Though Dharma could still feel that Zoro was finding it difficult to utter words.

'I am good. Just my head is a bit heavy.' Dharma responded.

'I am so sorry. I guess, in my anxiety, I walloped you with my stun ray.' Zoro felt highly apologetic.

'That is alright. Where are we? Is this Eritrea?' Dharma asked.

'Haha. No, my good Lord. We are in Janak 290'. Zoro responded.

'What is Janak 290?' Dharma asked in an astonishing voice.

'You may say it is a starship. A space vessel. We call it a Nifty, though.' Zoro replied. He approached Dharma to find out whether everything was alright. There were lots of machines, and the screen in front showed the health stats of Dharma.

'Ok.' Dharma said coldly. He was not much interested. His thought immediately took him to his last memory of planet Earth. He grimaced and asked, 'What happened to my parents? That dastardly attack on the Military headquarters by the terrorists.' Dharma sounded very worried.

'Unfortunately, my Lord, it seems that your parents may not have survived. What last I saw was that they were engulfed in fire.' Zoro said in a sad tone.

'No…. Can I go back to them? I want them. They need me.' Dharma was shattered.

'My Lord, if you want to go back, no one here has the authority to stop you. But I will earnestly request you to understand what Eritrea is facing. What are your people facing? The sufferings and sacrifices we have made to protect you for so many years. Once you are aware of everything, you are free to make your choice. You are our supreme commander, our Lord, the son of God, and all-powerful. Your wish is our final command. So, we leave it up to your good judgment as to what you decide, my supreme lord.' Zoro said in a polite tone.

Dharma was in an emotional crisis. He was torn. His heart was saying, go back, see what happened to your parents—those who have brought him up. But then some part of his heart was also telling him that his parents had enjoined him to come here and do the duty. It was not anything but their command, which Dharma had to obey by being here. It could be their last wish to ask Dharma to embrace his destiny and help these people in whatever manner he could. These people thought he was their God, and Dharma had to ensure their morale was not shattered by his impulsive deed.

'Zoro, my friend, I am here to stay. Educate me about the situation.' Dharma said in the firmest voice.

'I knew this. Bof could not be wrong. I am so excited. The son of God is coming with us. Eritrea would be free now.' Zoro ecstatically rejoiced.

'Haha. But Zoro, tell me where this Janak 290, this spaceship is headed to. And it would be great if you could help me understand in a bit more detail. I am lost.' Dharma said calmly. He knew that Zoro felt he could be the saviour, but he was a mere mortal who couldn't even defeat Zoro; then, how could he help the people of Eritrea. Dharma was confused, but his training on Earth had taught him to understand the situation thoroughly before reaching any conclusion.

'I will, my Lord. But before that, you must eat something. I believe you would be famished.' Zoro said in a concerned tone. Slowly, his

command over his speech was improving. His words were now more easily comprehensible than before.

'I am a little hungry. What do you have to offer me?' Dharma jovially said.

'Sire, we are on a cosmic vessel—a CV. That too on a Nifty, which is meant for a long cruise journey. You will not find food like you are used to on Earth. But the food I will give you will nourish you and make you feel full.' Zoro said in such a tone that his disappointment was apparent.

'That's alright, my friend.' Dharma responded. He patted the shoulder of Zoro, and Zoro felt elated. The son of God considered him a friend. Zoro was merely a servant to this deity; the humility of Dharma was unheard of.

Zoro gave a mental command, and a robot rushed immediately near him with a small cube. The cube opened, and there were two small tablets. One was red in colour, and the other was light blue. Zoro picked up the red one and said, 'My sire, this you can have now. The blue one you can have after the red one.'

'I will also need water to drink this tablet.' Dharma said while lifting the red tablet in his hand.

'No, sire. You put it in your mouth. It will melt, and you will feel the vigour.' Zoro responded.

Dharma ate the tablet, and his body felt a sudden boost of energy. He felt as if he had eaten a heavy meal.

Zoro said, 'Now, my Lord, you may care for having the blue one.'

'Sure. Though I am feeling full.' Dharma responded while picking the blue one.

'Sire, the blue one will fulfil the need for water. It doesn't have any other nutrient, but it is also very important.' Zoro replied.

Dharma had the second tablet, too, and indeed it felt like all his thirst was quenched. He felt that he would now not need to eat for many days.

It seems as if Zoro had picked his brains. Zoro said, 'Yes sire. Now you don't need to eat for another Kel'.

'Kel?' Dharma was surprised by this word.

'Oh. I meant almost two Earth days. We have galactic time and don't use standards based on an individual planet.' Zoro responded.

'I understand that. An inter-planetary or inter-stellar civilization cannot have the same time.' Dharma responded. He continued further, 'But this is

interesting two small tablets and no need for food or water for two days. This would help space travel a lot.'

'Yes, sire. And you will learn about galactic timekeeping. We call them Tymex measures. They are the most helpful tool for arriving at the mathematical solutions of complex space travels. Prof. Boro is an expert on that.' Zoro responded.

'Hmm. I guess so. Who is Prof. Boro? It seems he is an important guy. You have referred to him before too.' Dharma asked curiously.

'I will tell you, Sire. But before we discuss Prof. Boro, let me request you to come with me to the control room of this spaceship.' Zoro responded.

Dharma and Zoro started walking towards the mirror. Dharma was surprised, but as soon he reached the mirror, it felt as if Zoro had given a mental command, and the mirror faded away to give way to Dharma and Zoro to leave the room. Once they left the room, the mirror door appeared again.

Dharma was astonished at the scene. He felt as if he was in a palatial hotel lobby. There were many rooms attached to the lobby, which was of around eight floors. Dharma could guess that it was a huge circular vehicle with eight floors and many rooms. There were so many mirrors that Dharma felt he could see himself everywhere. Though now Dharma knew these mirrors were not glasses but doors which operate through a mental command.

Zoro started walking towards the staircase. He stopped just before descending. He said, 'My Lord, would you like to take the stairs, or shall I beam you directly to the command room.'

'I would like to walk through. It would help me to appreciate this beauty of a vehicle.' Dharma responded.

'I had guessed so. Let's take the stairs then.' Zoro said and started descending the stairs.

Dharma could see many robots and droids but no other living creatures. It was only Zoro and him. The spaceship was full of glass and mirrors. The area wall was bright and luminous though it could be guessed that it was due to an artificial lighting source. They could walk easily, which meant there was artificial gravity, some atmospheric pressure and a supply of oxygen. Because Dharma was comfortable and could breathe easily.

'What you think of about the CV, sire.' Zoro asked with a touch of pride in his voice.

'I don't know whether a space vehicle can be such. It looks like a posh hotel to me, sans guests. But one thing is very astonishing: where are the other crew members.' Dharma said.

'What crew?' Zoro asked.

'If this is a spacecraft, don't you have a crew? Who will tend to the vehicle?' Dharma questioned.

'Sire, this vehicle is not an ordinary vehicle. It has its own intelligence. It doesn't need any instruction. It can repair itself. It can dodge any danger on its own. In fact, it cannot be commanded. It follows its own orders.' Zoro responded.

'What? You are saying that if you want to take this spacecraft instead of Eritrea to some other planet, you cannot.' Dharma was surprised.

'I can. But no one else can.' Zoro replied.

'It is a bit confusing.' Dharma said.

'Sire, I will explain. Right now, for this journey, this vehicle has accepted me as its master. All the Nifty—I mean those space vehicles that could achieve Tylight speed and above are intelligent. They drive and act on their own subject to the command of the 'master of the sail'. The perpetual master of this Nifty is Prof. Boro, but for this journey, I am the 'master of the sail'." Zoro had a touch of pride while stating that he was the master of the sail for this journey to pick Dharma. It was unsure whether the pride was since a lowly Eritrean being like Zoro was given the duty to escort the son of God or because he was made the master of the sail of Janak 290.

'I got the drift Zoro. I am right now not in the mood to go into such technical details of the spacecraft.' Dharma gestured for Zoro to stop.

'Ok, my Lord.'

Dharma started enjoying the beauty of spacecraft, which was just machines and robots everywhere. Dharma could feel how the world would look without humans. It was a terrible feeling. Dharma's thoughts were broken by Zoro's cracked voice.

'My Lord, we are now entering the command centre.'

'Oh. From the outside, it is no different. It looks like all the same.' Dharma astonished.

Dharma and Zoro entered, and the mirror door gave way automatically.

Dharma could see the command centre had a huge screen in front, with many complex contraptions all around. Everything seemed to be working on its own.

Welcome to the command centre of Janak 290. The Nifty—CV makes Tymex Date $^{332|12|2}$/13'14'8 Nano Date |1|2|3:5:8:1.

Dharma felt someone telepathized to him.

'It is the space vehicle which is welcoming you.' Zoro explained.

'This is interesting. Thanks, Janak 290.' Dharma responded, looking all around the command centre of Janak 290. It was full of glasses and mirrors all around. Then Dharma's vision fixated on the large screen, which had the image of the universe. A small circular-shaped figure was cruising past, and it was seen that there were two different universe bubbles connected through a small black spot.

'So, you see that we are now entering into the Muverse or parallel universe as you call it, through this tunnel. This was the portal which linked the human universe with Muverse.' Zoro pointed his hand towards the large screen.

The picture zoomed in. Janak 290 could sense that Dharma would like to see the detail; he was not used to understanding the raw schema.

Dharma wondered whether the spaceship could also read his mind.

'It can. My Lord, you have not yet learnt the art of cryptic cerebral messaging. Once you learn, you can also telepathize to one or many. You will also learn the art of hiding what you don't want others to learn.' Zoro responded telepathically to Dharma.

Dharma was surprised. These aliens had really made some progress. Though he now concentrated on the screen before him, which displayed a circular-shaped space vehicle entering a black tunnel, and soon it was engulfed entirely in it. In a short while, the vehicle came out from the other side of the tunnel.

'Now you are in Muverse, my Lord. This is your world. You are the son of God of this cosmos.' Zoro exclaimed.

'Thanks, Zoro. But how much time did it take.' Dharma asked.

'Tymex time is hardly 0.06 Kel. If I have to give you an Earth standard, it would be 3.5 hours.' Zoro responded. This time he telepathized instead of speaking.

'From Earth to this point where the two parallel universes meet, we travelled in under four hours.' Dharma posited.

'Well, my lord, we are travelling in Janak 290. It can cruise at 2.8 Tylight speed.'

'Tylight speed. If I remember correctly was a speed around twenty-five hundred times light speed.' Dharma said anxiously.

'Yes, my Lord, and therefore 2.8 Tylight speed in Earth standard is around 7000 times light speed', Zoro responded.

'That is extraordinary. And how long would it take for us to reach our destination.' Dharma was surprised. Dharma felt that if in under four hours Earth standard, he could travel in the universe at what speed they would travel in Muverse. And how come such super-luminal travel is possible.

'We are heading for planet Mazol, my sire.' Zoro responded.

'Mazol!' Dharma was surprised. What he last remembered was he was to liberate Eritrea from Xor. What was this new planet? Dharma had many questions in his mind.

'That is the hideout where Prof. Boro and the team are stationed.' Zoro explained.

'I guess it is away from the reaches of Xorian forces.' Dharma deducted while still puzzled by the new information being fed to him.

'It indeed is. It is around 234 Mylight away from Eritrea.' Zoro responded. Though he was cut in between by Dharma's baffled voice, 'Light. …'

'Sire, these are Tymex measures. For intra-galactic cosmic travels, these are devised. Prof. Boro will explain the technicalities. But for simplicity's sake, let me state that Mazol and Eritrea are around 950 light-years away.' Zoro stated hurriedly. He had to ensure that before the initiation of Dharma, he should not confuse himself with heavy technical jargon.

'I understand, Zoro. I have studied cosmology on Earth. Light speed could not be breached. Though there are various concepts on which even we are working. I guess you have finally devised a mechanism to go as high as 7000 times light speed. I would love to know about the technicality, but before that, I feel, I should know more about the situation and what I am expected to do.' Dharma responded.

'Yes, my Lord. We would cover this 1000 light years distance in roughly twenty Kel or around forty-eight Earth days.' Zoro continued.

'I understand why you use such dynamic Tymex measures. This way, you may handle one part of the super-luminal travel.' Dharma again cut Zoro short.

'Yes, my Lord. Though Prof. Boro would be the right person to guide you on this. He is the one who is a renowned astrophysicist of Fran galaxy.'

'I guess Fran is the galaxy where Eritrea and other planets are situated.' Dharma replied. This time with a certain calmness and certainty.

'Yes, my Lord. Let me use this time to tell you about our world,' Zoro said in an ecstatic tone.

'I am all ears. Though let me tell you that interestingly on Earth too, we have a country named Eritrea' Dharma responded.

'We are aware of it. Though you will learn about an interesting happenstance a bit later.' Zoro clarified. Dharma wondered if everything around this person was a mystery.

After a pause, Zoro continued, 'I am a Fleshy by race, and so are you, my Lord. We both belong to the planet Eritrea, a beautiful planet.'

'Fleshy. Interesting.' Dharma exclaimed in between.

'Yes. You may have now realized that we are like the humans of Earth. In all features, behaviour, and emotional traits, you may easily say that Fleshy and humans are just the same. That's why the Earth was the perfect disguise for you. Bof was so very correct. It had predicted about Earth at times when even we were not aware of any inter-stellar travel, leave alone travelling to a parallel universe.' Zoro continued with pride in his tone. His religious scripture and belief were not a myth as many had claimed but were truly the word of God. That's why the son of God not only survived on Earth but now had returned to emancipate Eritrea.

Dharma could feel that Zoro had gone into some thoughts; he shook him by his muscular shoulder, which was covered through a black robe and said, 'Zoro! Hope everything alright.'

'Yes, my master. I am sorry for the inconvenience.' Zoro apologized immediately.

'That's fine. I understood I am Fleshy by race, who are like humans in physical and emotional make-up.' Dharma summarized what he had learnt from Zoro.

Dharma could see an image of the beautiful Eritrean planet. A planet is rich in fauna, flora, beautiful seas and a vast land mass. Sun's reflecting rays looked like a beautiful cyan-coloured world. The Fleshy were seen moving around their town in airborne vehicles and large skyscrapers.

Zoro flashed a vision. The telepathic ability of Zoro was parred excellence. Dharma could virtually see whatever Zoro had in his mind.

'This is the Fleshy town Lumina, the capital of Lux Fulgor, the country which is pre-dominantly dwelled by Fleshy.' Zoro's voice could be heard by Dharma while he was seeing the vision of the beautiful city of Lumina. It could easily beat any sci-fi city Dharma would have seen in the fictional movies back on Earth.

'It looks so Earth-like. It could be any other city on Earth. Just posher and grander.' Dharma exclaimed. He continued, 'So Eritrea could be equated to Earth, maybe slightly bigger in area and volume, I guess.'

'Yes, my Lord. Eritrea, unlike Earth, hosts four intelligent civilizations, including Fleshy. Another is the Angelans. The creatures who have evolved from the avifauna. They could fly as fast as an eagle on Earth. These humanoid Angelans could snugly collapse their wings, and at that time, it would be highly difficult to differentiate between them and Fleshy.' Zoro telepathized and then showed another vision to Dharma.

Dharma could see the huge Angelan land mass. Many cities and countries were filled with Angelan presence. The Angelan population was not dependent upon any artificial transport for intra-city travel. Though huge planes could be seen, Dharma guessed they were meant for inter-city or trans-continental travel.

Dharma heard a voice again; it was Zoro telepathizing, while the vision of Angelan territories was before Dharma.

'The Angelan Heptad is the biggest of the territories. It is divided into two parts, Alpha and Beta Heptad. These are mostly on political lines, but both contained the majority of Angelan races. The huge land mass you see, my Lord, is called Heous.'

'It seems that Angelans have the largest land masses under their suzerainty. Lux Fulgor is a tiny territory in comparison to Angelans.' Dharma observed.

'That is true, my Lord. Lux Fulgor is less than one per cent of the land mass, and the majority of Fleshy dwell there. Angelans, on the contrary, have almost eighty per cent of the Heous land in their control.'

'I can understand. Historically Angelans could fly, and maybe before the civilizations had learnt the art of industrialization, the Angelans would have dominated. Because speed and ability to be airborne would have given them distinct advantages in any warfare. So, they controlled a huge land mass.' Dharma said with a purposeful demeanour.

'You indeed are our saviour, my lord. In my knowledge, you could deduce things faster than anyone else could.' Zoro exclaimed.

'Thanks, Zoro. But this was nothing great. Anyone could have guessed it.' Dharma shrugged and said, 'But I see a huge green land mass. Is that also in control of Angelans?"

'No, my Lord. The entire land mass of Eritrea is divided into two big parts, you may say two continents. One is Heous Land, and the other

is Greenland. Heous land is politically divided into seven parts, Alpha Heptad, Beta Heptad, Centauri Land, Lux Fulgor, Vari, Olga and Mystify. Greenland, on the contrary, is an apolitical land territory used to preserve the fauna and flora of Eritrea. None of the intelligent races, whether Angelan or Fleshy, disturb the ecology there. Greenland is used for animal hunting to ensure the animal population remains in control and for certain fruit and tree farming for industrial use.'

'That is an interesting concept. A continent unto itself dedicated to plants and trees and natural animal kinds. This is unheard of on Earth.' Dharma ejaculated. He could not believe that there was such a planet with intelligent races which could let a vast land mass for the development of natural fauna and flora. There were some lessons for humans to learn. Dharma thought.

'You said there are four intelligent civilizations. I guess you need to talk about two more. Isn't it?' Dharma queried as it dawned upon him that he did not completely learn about Eritrean intelligent races.

'Yes, my Lord. You are sharp indeed. The other is the Centaurs. Like your mythical characters at Earth.'

'You have Centaur in reality.' Dharma was utterly surprised.

'Yes. They also command a huge land mass. Almost ten per cent of the Heous land. Ten times more than Fleshy.' Zoro had a touch of sadness in his tone.

'Interesting. So, Centaurs are primarily living in Centauri land.'

'Yes, my Lord. It is easy to guess.' Zoro responded and showed the vision of Centauri land.

Dharma could see the vast land mass full of specially curated forests where natural caves and artificially created abodes gave it a completely different mien from the skyscrapers and modern construction of Angelan Heptad or Lux Fulgor. The Centaurs, it seemed to Dharma, preferred to lead a simple life. It was clear that they were primarily an agrarian economy with huge land masses tilled and harvested. Many Centaur men and women trotting here and there. Appeared to be happy and content in their own world. These half-horse half humans were fast sprinters and still used bows and arrows for hunting. Though many were seen using the latest gadgets tied to their wrist for video calling etc. For Dharma, this was a unique scene. The image projection was of such high precision that Dharma felt he was in the field and all these Centaurs were running beside him.

'These are Centaurs of Centauri land. They have not developed technologically as much, but still, they are respected a lot by other races.

In the past, they dominated the marshal race and ruled over a large landscape. The mighty Centaurs now are constrained to lead a life on past glory.' Zoro telepathized to Dharma.

'I can understand. Angelans could fly, Centaurs could sprint, and therefore, these would be the dominating races, unlike Fleshy, who were neither capable of natural flight nor had the advantage of fast manoeuvrability.' Dharma posited.

'You are so very correct, my Lord.' Zoro exclaimed.

'Thanks, Zoro. I guess flattery does the trick often.' Dharma chuckled.

'It does with all, but I believe my Lord, the son of God, is different.' Zoro remarked.

Zoro continued. 'The last race, and maybe the most dominating one, was the Acquians. These were spread across the vast contours of the ocean bed.'

Zoro showed the vision of beautiful aquatic cities. Dharma could see deep into the ocean bed; there were cities with large town planning which would envy the best architects and planners even on the land. Acquians were half human, half fish. The skin was tough, and below the waist area, they were like fishes. Many were giant aquatic creatures though few were too small. Typical Acquian was taller and more muscular than most humans.

They had no public transport, and most of them swam their way. Though for faster speed, it seemed in their belt was a special button which would give them artificial power to cover large distances in a shorter time. For inter-city travels, Dharma could see in the vision large train-type structures that were plying on some kind of fixed tracks.

Suddenly Dharma saw the vision crashing, and he could see Zoro in front of him. Zoro said, 'My Lord, I am extremely sorry; I didn't realize that it is almost a Kel; I mean, two Earth days, you require sleep.'

'That's okay, Zoro. I also did not realise in this mysterious fable of various races that it was so much time that had lapsed.' Dharma responded.

'I guess till you are accustomed to space flights, you should rest as per Earth times. Your biological clock is set that way.' Zoro replied.

'True. Let me take a rest. I will again meet you in ten Earth hours' time.' Dharma said while walking towards the mirror gate of the control room.

Zoro gave a command, and the gate opened. Zoro trotted fast towards Dharma and escorted him to a small chamber nearby. Dharma saw that there was a bed and a few books.

'Though we have lost the art of reading books. We get all the information from the direct cerebral transfer. But I thought since I am going to pick you

up, you would love to read a few books while we cruise through to Mazol.' Zoro responded with a touch of delight. He could foresee the comfort of his lord, and that was the greatest satisfaction for Zoro.

'Thanks, Zoro. That was very thoughtful of you. But I would love to know about the cerebral transfer too, maybe sometime later.' Dharma responded.

'Good night, sire. I will come back in a few Ahom's time. I meant a few Earth hours.' Zoro was puzzled as he inadvertently ended up using Tymex measures, which Dharma was not accustomed to.

'It is alright, Zoro. I understand Ahom may correspond to Earth hours like Kel to Earth days. See you post my nap. You also better take some rest.' Dharma comforted him.

'I will not be sleeping sometime soon. We, in that sense, are slightly different from the humans on Earth. Fleshy sleeps the least out of the four races. Eritrean days are generally longer, almost equivalent to two Earth days. We sleep by Earth standards hardly four hours in two Earth days. That was primarily the reason why Fleshy were successful in space travels and also in artificial avionics.'

'Good to note.' Dharma was confused about what to comment. He did not know whether he was a Fleshy or a human.

'I will not trouble you further, my Lord. You take rest.' Zoro said and left immediately. The mirror door gave way and again assembled back.

Dharma wondered how his life had changed in the past few hours. Some time back, he was with his parents, and now he was in a spaceship which, as Zoro suggested, travelled at 7000 times the speed of light. He was now required to emancipate an entire planet which was so very different. Complex, intelligent races treat him as their lord. He was a lowly human whom even Zoro could have the ability to abduct that easily. How come he be their lord. How come he took on the mighty Xorian Empire, which had the capability of defeating these races, which had the capability of developing superluminal spacecraft.

Dharma was confused and filled with inner doubt. His thoughts suddenly took him to his mother and father. He felt as if his mother was enjoining him, 'Dharma, you have to embrace your destiny.'

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## CHAPTER 2

# Planet Eritrea

Dharma looked at the various books that were there. It seemed they were printed in some different language. Dharma could in no way understand their content. He was looking at the print and the quality of books; it seemed they were old. The pages had turned yellow, but these books were preserved well.

'I can interpret the book for your sire.' Dharma felt as if someone had telepathized him. He saw a small droid assistant. It seemed that the droid understood what Dharma wanted. The machine assistant continued, 'Sire, I am here to help and comfort you. I guess you want to read these books. These are in ancient Fleshy script, the same in which Bof is written. But don't worry, I will translate it for you. You give me the books, and I will telepathize them to you, sire.'

This was strange. To read the book, I had to take the help of an assistant who would directly telepathize them to me. But Dharma was curious about what could be in these old books. Dharma asked the assistant, 'Can you tell me what this book is? I mean the title.' Dharma gave one of the books, which was decently thick and had a red colour picture as a cover. It seemed like a historical book about a planet based on the diagram on the cover page.

'It is titled 'Brief History of Eritrea-Pre-alien era" Droid telepathized.

'Ok, read me through it.' Dharma directed and lay on the bed.

The droid read the whole book and telepathized while he was reading. Dharma felt as if he was himself reading the same. One after the other, the droid read four books that were there.

Dharma learnt how planet Eritrea grew and evolved under different phases and how the various races evolved over time. These books contained historical information. Dharma could guess that these books were of the

period which was old in time. As there was no mention of the Xorian war or occupation. It seemed that post the Xorian occupation, the Eritreans learnt the art of cerebral transmission of information, and the books, in general, were extinct.

Dharma started internalizing what he had understood from the books. Before the Xorian aggression on Eritrea, Eritrea had evolved interestingly. Dharma learnt that the entire land mass of Eritrea was divided into two major land parcels, the Heous (40%) and Greenland (60%). The vast serene ocean occupied almost 2/3rd the area of the planet. The two land masses were also separated by a large ocean area. Ancient Eritreans made Greenland their base, and for them, the other land mass, the Heous, was a foreign territory. These ancient Eritreans felt that the land mass of Heous was occupied by demons, so they never attempted to explore it.

Greenland developed and grew mostly as a self-sufficient agrarian economy. The Angelans were the most dominating race, courtesy of their aviation abilities. This fact was evident as the royalty was from the Angelans. Ancient Eritreans had many countries and principalities spread across Greenland. Interestingly though, they always believed in co-existence with the wild and never disturbed the fauna and flora.

Another distinct feature was apolitical territories. These ancient Eritreans never made any political territory, and people were free to roam around where they wished. It was primarily because Angelans were at the helm of affairs, who could fly and love to explore different areas. Centaurs and Fleshy mostly were to serve the royal Angelans. Though Centaurs were more important as they were the army for the royal Angelans. Fleshy were treated as a second-grade citizenry.

Life was content and good, but then a few Angelans wished to explore the Heous land mass. The royalty amongst the Angelan, though, was always in opposition to such exploration, but many of the Angelans could easily reach out to the land masses at Heous. They started making it their home. Many Centaurs and almost all the Fleshy left for the Heous land when the chance invention of the sea ship happened.

A new political dispensation evolved at Heous land. It was distinct from the apolitical dispensation in Greenland. Heous evolved, and soon there was an industrial revolution in the Heous land, which made it prosper. In a matter of a century, Heous's land was prosperous. It had a population from all four intelligent races, namely Angelan (70%),

Centaurs (18%), Fleshy (11%) and a tiny population of Acquian (1%) who, for a better life, left the sea and were ready to live in ponds/lake or rivers of the Heous territory.

Politically Heous was divided into seven provinces, and each province would elect one leader for two Eritrean years. These leaders together constituted a Committee of Satraps, or COS, which decided all the political matters for Heous. Each province was free to make rules and regulations regarding its area. However, any decisions that may impact more than one political area or pertain to defence, economy, commerce, trade, currency, space exploration, technology, artificial intelligence, sea exploration or mining were to be decided by COS.

Slowly the Greenlanders were outpaced by the development at Heous, and they were no match to the Heous. Heous grew in technology, communication, weaponry and space exploration, whereas Greenlanders were content with their agrarian economy and simplistic lifestyle.

It seemed there were two Eritrea on one planet. Interestingly though, as Zoro explained, Greenlanders abided by their twin philosophy, no political territory and co-existence with the natural fauna and flora.

As Heous outclassed the Greenlanders, the different partisan classes of Heretics, Yakuts and Liberals of Greenland started assuming their importance. These partisan classes were dogmatic though agnostic of races.

An Angelan or a Fleshy or Centaur, anyone can be a Heretic or Yakut or Liberal based on her or his affiliation and drive. In Green land, there was no fixed political boundary. All those who wanted to live outside the political boundary of Heous and did not want to pay taxes or get associated with any of the seven provincial governments[1] of Heous were free to stay at this free land mass. The only condition was they must not disturb the fauna and flora.

Heretics were those who believed that they were the royal blood. All the followers, whether Angelan, Centaur or Fleshy, who believed in command of the royal blood, were said to be Heretics. They felt that they were the oldest on the planet. They were primarily farmers and could not deal with the industrialization in Heous. They domesticated the animals and led a simple and content life. Heretics were mostly simple beings and were content with an agrarian economy. One of these Heretic sages was

[1] Refer Glossary for details of Seven Provincial Governments of Heous of this time.

believed to have received the message from God and had written the Bof. Heretics believed in Bof and abided by it.

Their last leader was King Heera. The farm produce and the handcrafted items were sold by Heretics to even Heous land. But given no political boundary in Greenland, there was no compulsion to stay at a particular place for anyone. Heretics believed that the Heous, which was not suitable terrain for farming, was populated by the outcast of Heretics. It may be a prosperous land, but still, the food for those outcasts was supplied by Heretics. All the seven Satraps of Heous get the raw food, dairy and meat produced by Heretics, and so Heretics believed they were a significant player.

Yakuts were the traders who used to work as a middleman to provide supplies from Heretics to Heous. Yakuts were business-minded people. They were in Greenland as they didn't want to pay taxes to various provincial governments of Heous. The flip side was that they didn't get the protection and pie in the development these seven provinces could offer. Their last elected leader was Queen Joba, who was of the Angelan race and was the most successful businesswoman in Greenland. Her factories produced many items, including the ships to sail from Greenland to Heous, furniture, electrical items etc. She and her ancestors had devised the technique of managing the industrialized factories in Greenland, which may work without causing any damage to the Green Land's flora and fauna. The biggest marvel was the floating factories on the seas and oceans. Queen Joba was among the most powerful players in the overall scheme of things. The Heous land was much more prosperous and developed and boasted many business tycoons and stalwarts.

On the contrary, Queen Joba's was the only business house in Greenland, which had a pure monopoly on Greenland. The Greenlanders were not averse to this monopoly. They were more than happy to purchase from Queen Joba than Heous people. Therefore, she felt she was an important player in the overall scheme of things.

Those who followed the Liberal tradition and were bereft of materialistic thoughts were called liberals. They followed the spiritual leader, Yogi Raj. The Fleshy. Their focus was meditation and gaining spiritual knowledge. Many Angelan, Centaurs and Fleshy who want to lead a life without materialistic attachments were called liberals, and they look up to Yogi Raj for guidance.

The land trotters were led by seven Satraps of Heous and King Hera, Queen Joba and Yogi Raj. All important decisions that could impact the

land masses of Heous and Greenland were always taken by the consent of all.

Acquians had their own territory in water, except for those few Acquians who had accepted the Heousian way of life; the majority of Acquian's habitat was the Ocean Beds. Acquians were divided into 10 major political territories, each having many smaller administrative nations. The cities in Ocean Bed were beautifully made with many marvellous engineering structures.

However, constant war among them destroyed many beautiful architectures. Also, the ocean's environment was heavily damaged. This gave birth to the institution of Param Guru, a religious and spiritual leader and ensured that various rulers of city-states didn't fight amongst each other.

In the recent past, there was even a fight between the Heous and Acquians for the territorial water, which both claimed as their domain. The fight also reached a stage where Heous was ready to nuke Acquian territory, and the Acquians were ready to use their dangerous weapon, 'Annihilator', to destroy the entire land mass. However, Param Guru intervened and prevented the same. Hence even the seven Satraps of Heous respected Param Guru.

Dharma found the history of Eritrea interesting. The four books were finished, and one last book was left. The book was kept on a golden cover. He slid it out and shoved it to the droid assistant. Droid assistant read the title, "Bof."

Dharma was interested in learning about the content of this book too. It was something that Zoro always referred to. Although Dharma was never inclined towards religious books, he thought of reading them up with the help of his droid assistant. However, he felt somnolent and had no energy to finish it. Before his assistant could start, Dharma changed in mind. He took the book back from his assistant, put it back in its golden cover and went to sleep.

Various races and the complex society of Eritrea were all that he could see, even in his dream. The distinct world of Eritrea where four races, and two huge land masses, one with political divisions and the other apolitical, where intelligent races lived and coexisted alongside the animal kind. This was a unique planet. Dharma had to free them from alien occupation. This thought itself was giving shivers to Dharma, even in his dreams.

Something was telling him from within, '*How can you fight and free such a complex planet? More so, Dharma had no idea about the adversary. But someone who could defeat the space-faring civilization, that adversary must be very powerful. Dharma would be no match for him. He should take control of this spaceship and run back to Earth. …*'

Dharma went into a deep sleep with these thoughts, and fear engulfed him.

'I am not sure, but this movement is suspicious. Jarvis, you need to see this.' The robotic AGI assistant video messaged through the web of the instrument in his cockpit from the small vigil satellite that was floating in outer space of the Eritrean solar system.

'Send me the feed.' Jarvis, the Hum[2], responded. He was far away, sitting in his own small cabin in the Cloud city building—planet Eritrea. This building was an engineering marvel. It was floating above the cloud and looked like a huge cloud when observed from the ground.

Jarvis received the feed, which was immediately projected in front of him. The visuals right in front of Jarvis showed a circular ship suddenly appearing from nowhere into the galactic space and zipping past towards the trajectory, which calculation suggested as Apsis coordinate D90:41.24.

'This is a Nifty. We don't know whether there is an error in calculation or is it really headed in a direction that is totally unknown to us.' Jarvis telepathized, and the instruments immediately relayed his message to the robotic assistant in the satellite station far away at the outer end of the Eritrean solar system. It was more than 10 *Myt* away. Had Dharma known it, he would have fainted knowing that two people were conversing over thirteen billion klicks as if they had been on Earth over the phone.

'The calculations are right.' Telepathized the robot. 'I have cross-checked. The Nifty has travelled to the forbidden parallel universe and now heading in some direction.'

'I got it. It calls for a deeper probe. If my intuition is correct, we are in for a big catch.' Jarvis responded before letting his robotic assistant finish his statement.

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[2] Hum the aboriginal of planet John. For description see Various races annexure.

Jarvis disconnected the connection. He immediately called the head of security. Once he finished the conversation, he had mixed emotions. His rectangular forehead had thick wrinkles and eye stalks wide open.

Jarvis had heard the rumours that some kind of saviour was about to come to help the rebels in their cause. His senses were telling him that this messiah had entered. A huge war like never seen or heard before was going to ensue.

Bof said that whenever the son of God would present himself, the entire Muverse would come to know about it. He would be like the light of the sun that would reach every corner of the planet except at places that were not meant to receive it.

Dharma did not realize but had slept for almost a Kel, i.e., slightly more than two Earth days. When he woke up, he found himself in the same room. He was feeling fresh and energetic. He thought of taking a bath but realized he was in a spacecraft. He did not know the routine of a space crew and what he was supposed to do.

Suddenly he saw the Bof again and was inclined to read it. He pulled it out of its golden cover, and before Dharma could open the first page, the mirror door faded away, giving way to Zoro.

'Hello, my Lord. Hope you are feeling vigorous after that long nap of yours.' Zoro said while he approached Dharma with another cube of tablets appeared.

'I am good, Zoro. But how do you realize that I am up from my sleep.' Dharma wondered.

'This room is under my supervision. In fact, every corner of Janak 290 I could see. I saw you reading the books, and then before you could read Bof, you slept.' Zoro said innocently. He had no hesitation in openly proclaiming he was spying on Dharma, his Lord.

'Ok. What is there in the cube? Another tablet.' Dharma quizzed.

'Well, yes, sire. I thought you might like to have another nourishment. You may be feeling hungry.' Zoro responded.

'In fact, I am not hungry or thirsty. I was wondering, if you don't have any water on the spacecraft, how do you take a bath. I guess you take a bath …' Dharma asked a bit hesitantly.

'You don't worry, my Lord. You simply get into the small room attached to your chamber. You will get cleansed.' Zoro responded.

Dharma did not know how to respond. He entered the small room. There was an announcement as soon he entered, 'Please undress, sire.' Dharma felt as if the chamber telepathized to him. He opened his clothes. He felt as if someone had activated the command, and many small protrusions from all over could be seen. A strange kind of ray was shot from these protrusions, and soon the small chamber filled with foggy clouds. Dharma did not know what was going on, but he felt like all his body dirt was cleaned. He felt as if these rays were cleaning his inner self too. In a few moments, the fog gave way to clear visibility, and Dharma could see his reflection in the mirror room. He was apparently clean, and he felt as if his excreta were also cleansed. It was interesting technology. There was no necessity to defecate. The nutrition is filled through tablets, and these small chambers shoot rays which cleanse both the outer and inner body.

Soon Dharma felt as if something not visible to human eyes was filling him up. He felt some sensation throughout his body, and suddenly Dharma realized he was draped in a strange red and yellow dress. It was a tight attire covering his whole body. Dharma looked at the mirror and saw his reflection. He was draped in tight yellow trousers and a red sweatshirt. The shimmering red leather shoes were going well with the attire. Dharma's muscular tone of the body was coming out nicely in that dress.

'Thanks, sir. We are done.' Dharma felt another announcement through a telepathic message.

He walked out of the chamber, and the mirror door allowed him to pass through. Dharma was surprised by such a technique but decided not to utter a word.

'Sire, don't be surprised. In space travel, we don't have the luxury of bathing in the pool; therefore, we have these chambers which will clean the body. I know you may miss the natural spring and bathing in a large pool of water. I really regret making you wait till we land at Mazol.' Zoro said in a sad tone.

'Don't fluster, my dear friend and certainly don't be regretful. It is alright. I am not a fussy person. I was just wondering about the technology.' Dharma said in a calming tone to comfort Zoro.

'You look dashing in this new picabot dress.' Zoro exclaimed.

'Thanks. But what is this dress.' Dharma asked perplexedly.

'Sire, unlike Earth, here only one picabot dress is sufficient. This would change as per your mental command into any fashion that you would like to wear. At present, you are not aware of the technique to control it through the mind. But you will learn that shortly. So, this is now one dress forever. It is made up of picabot particles which through mental command can convert themselves into any shape and fabric.' Zoro explained.

Dharma was baffled at this new technology. Only one dress forever; that could change into any shape as per the mental command of the wearer. These Eritreans were supreme beings, and learning about their technological advancement made Dharma forlorn. He felt ashamed of himself and commiserated that he had to emancipate a race so superior to him. Didn't they depend on the wrong person? Dharma wondered.

'Sire, you are the son of God. The only thing is, because you had grown up on Earth, you don't realize your hidden potential. Once you meet Prof. Boro, you will know what you are.' Zoro said with an ecstatic tone. He could sense that Dharma was feeling dejected.

Dharma realized that his thoughts could be read, and thus he decided to wipe out such negativity. He would focus on his present.

'Thanks, Zoro. Take me to the command room. Would love to see how Janak 290 was cruising at such an ultra-fast speed.' Dharma said firmly.

'Sure, my Lord. Would you like to walk or beam?' Zoro asked.

'This time, beam me directly. Would love to experience it. Last time you beamed me, I was unconscious.' Dharma said jovially.

Zoro gave a mental command to Janak 290, the spacecraft. A beam was shot somewhere from the room, which Dharma could not guess, and both Zoro and Dharma disappeared from Dharma's resting chamber, and both appeared in the command room of Janak 290.

'Nice. I did not feel anything.' Dharma ecstatically stated.

'Yes, sire. Generally, we don't feel anything when we are beamed. It is far too fast to any living person's comfort.' Zoro responded.

'Now tell me where we are and when would we reach our destination. And why Mazol?' Dharma raised many questions in one go.

'Sire, I will show you where we are on the screen.' Zoro said. Janak 290 understood the requirement and displayed the screen on which the cosmic space was divided into various grid lines.

'We are here.' Zoro said, pointing towards the circular space vessel.

Dharma could see the spacecraft cruising along the cosmic space towards a faraway destination.

'We have covered some distance now, but still, Mazol is 220 Mylight away.' Zoro said and immediately, in a hurried tone, added, 'I meant around 900 light years away.'

'If I remember correctly, you said Mazol was around 950 lightyears away when I gained consciousness. And in no time, we have covered fifty light years. That is strange.' Dharma bewildered.

'True, My Lord. In around one Kel, slightly more than two Earth days, we cruised past around fifty light years,' Zoro responded.

'I could not believe I was sitting in a spacecraft which travels at 7000 times the light speed. I had always believed it to be impossible. I am really inclined to understand how this is possible.' Dharma stated ecstatically. He had fear, ecstasy and confusion altogether.

'For that, my Lord, you have to wait till we meet Prof. Boro.' Zoro remarked.

'In the meantime, can you explain to me, Zoro, why we are going to Mazol?' Dharma asked.

'Yes, my Lord. You are aware that Eritrea, which is a beautiful civilization of four remarkable races, the Angelan, the Acquian, the Centaurs and the Fleshy, is now under subjugation. The chief administrator of the entire planet is an alien Xorian—Governor Kor and not any Eritrean. He represents the evil Nokoevid. A huge battalion of Nonpareil Soldiery has taken over the planet.' Zoro said with a heavy voice.

'Oh, that is very sad. So, what about the political territory of Heous and Greenland and various classes like King Heera of Heretics, Queen Joba of merchant class Yakut and the Liberals.' Dharma asked.

'Sire, those were historical figures. The books I have given you were not written now. They were written at a time in past, and now we don't have any Heretic, Liberal or Yakut. These classes don't exist anymore.' Zoro responded.

'Oh. I am so sorry. I didn't think about the timelines.' Dharma apologized.

'It is alright, sire. As I said, we don't have any books of the latest time, so I have given you old books which talk about Eritrea before the first war with Xor. Everything changed after that. Even the second Xorian war took place, and after that, we are subjugated.'

'I got the drift Zoro. So, there were two wars between Xor and Eritrea.' Dharma got confused.

'Yes, sire. After the second war, Xorian established their rule over Eritrea.' Zoro said.

Dharma could not believe that if it was after the second war, the rule was established, what happened during the first war.

'We defeated Xor in the first war, sire.' Zoro said innocently. He had read what Dharma was thinking.

Dharma was now in utter shock. Eritreans had already defeated Xor once. They were so mighty. Now after losing the second war, they wanted an Earthling to command them to defeat the Xor. Dharma felt shocked. He did not understand how they could be so stupid to believe this. A humble, meek, naïve human from Earth who could not even defend himself against Zoro was expected to lead a group at Mazol to free Eritrea. 'This is seemingly impossible.' Dharma thought.

'No, sire, you will. Because you are not a meek or naïve human. You are the son of God. Bof says that you have capabilities which no one else possesses. You are the child of two worlds with energies of two worlds. You will achieve the purpose.' Zoro remarked.

'I surely will, Zoro.' Dharma overcoming his negativity said. Though deep inside, he was not convinced whether such kind of blind faith in a book would ever result in any success. Somehow, he felt that this book was the reason why these innocent people were misled. He felt a kind of irritation towards the petulant book.

'Sire, in the meantime, let me show you where Eritrea is.' Zoro said, mostly to change the grim situation.

'Sure, show me.' Dharma responded.

'This tunnel where the two parallel universes meet is near Eritrea. Just less than one half of light year.' Zoro said, pointing towards the screen for Dharma to look at.

Janak 290 zoomed in to show the full view of Eritrea to the tunnel between the two universes.

'That is interesting. This tunnel is so near to Eritrea and to Earth too.' Dharma quipped.

'It is. Though for the Earth we can understand it is coincident, for Eritrea it is not a coincidence.' Zoro remarked.

'So, this is not natural for the tunnel to exist near Eritrea.' Dharma wondered. 'Do these people have the technique of moving universal bodies too? It would be really shocking to hear it.' Dharma thought.

'This was created artificially by the evil Nokoevid. He used the dreaded weapon Qued and created this. But he did not know that he had committed a mistake. It allowed us to shove you through this artificial tunnel to the other world where you were reared so well. Now you have returned to end this evil Nokoevid.' Zoro remarked with a heavy voice; it was more difficult to comprehend him though his hatred towards Nokoevid was evident.

'Nokoevid has a powerful weapon which can create a route between two universes? 'Dharma was confused.

'Not exactly, sir. His weapon can destroy space-time—the fabric of the cosmos, leading to a strange phenomenon. Prof. Boro would be able to explain it better.' Zoro remarked.

Dharma could not believe what situation he was finding himself in. Something was telling him that he was drawn into a destiny wherein he had to now live by his legend. No one would believe that he was a mere human from Earth. He was now the son of God, which the revered Bof prophesized to defeat his nemesis—the evil Nokoevid. Dharma had to first win his inner fears before he could even think of embarking on this new journey.

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## CHAPTER 3

# Landing at Mazol

Dharma spent most of his time learning the art of telepathizing. Zoro was teaching him. Had they been at Eritrea or even at Mazol, Dharma would have had the advantage of cerebral transmission and thus learnt the art without going through the pain of manual learning.

Janak 290 had the facility, but as Zoro did not see the need for such cerebral transmission for this journey, that module was not activated for Zoro to use. Janak 290 would not allow Zoro to use any function to which he was not authorized.

Dharma was a quick learner. He had to be as he was the prophesied son of God. The Child of two worlds had the energy of two worlds and thus was twice as faster as any other living creature.

Dharma learnt the art of telepathy quite quickly and was now in a position to converse with Zoro. 'This is an interesting way to communicate. I must thank you for teaching me this.' Dharma telepathized to Zoro.

'Yes, my Lord. This will end your need to learn different languages. You can simply transfer your thoughts to others and learn their thoughts. This makes you a galactic citizenry.' Zoro responded. 'But you should not thank me. This was my duty. You are the one the Bof says would have the knowledge none of us possesses.'

'Zoro, thanks for everything. But still, I have not come to terms with accepting Bof. I have not yet read the book that you have given me. I don't know; I feel this entraps people. We should be agnostic to such religious scriptures.' Dharma finally presented his feelings about Bof to Zoro.

'You indeed are the son of God. Because Bof prophesied that you would not read the text of Bof till you free Eritrea. See, so you find it distasteful. I have deliberately kept the book in your room to check whether this prophecy comes true or not.' Zoro telepathized excitedly.

Dharma could not believe it. Zoro wanted to check whether he would read the book of Bof. That's why he had kept all those books there.

'I am sorry, sire, if I have hurt you.' Zoro apologized. He had read the thoughts of Dharma. Though Dharma had learnt how to telepath, he had to learn the art of shielding his thoughts from others.

'Don't be sorry, Zoro. It is none of your fault. This was something which I should not have even thought of. You have done this as part of your duty. If Bof has prophesied something, you are bound to test it. You must make sure I am the same person you have left on Earth.' Dharma responded.

'Sire, for that, I don't need a test. Janak 290 has a biological configuration detector. It had confirmed that you were you the moment I beamed you here. I just wondered and became curious as to why Bof said that you will not read Bof. So, I kept the book and have other books too.' Zoro telepathized in an apologetic tone.

'Still, my friend, don't think about it much. I am happy that you did so. At least now I know why I am not reading Bof.' Dharma responded.

'True, sire. You are not mad at me.' Zoro exclaimed.

'No. Definitely not Zoro.' Dharma said and hugged Zoro.

The coming time and days passed through. Zoro started teaching Dharma the art of telepathy and how to talk to one or to many through perceptual messages. Zoro also taught Dharma about covering or clouding one's thoughts so that no one can read your mind when you don't want them to.

Zoro said, 'Prof. Boro has mastered the art so much that even the best cerebral machine cannot uncover something from his mind that he doesn't want to tell. He is a genius.'

Dharma understood that Prof. Boro was a legend unto himself. The way Zoro praises him suggests that Boro is not an ordinary person. This made Dharma long to meet this professor and learn his story from him.

Dharma felt a kind of tingling feeling as if there was some change. He could not understand what that was, but he understood there was some kind of change. He asked Zoro, 'What was that? I felt that something had happened. I can't explain. But the feeling was similar when we took a roller coaster ride back on Earth, and suddenly the roller coaster dropped us from the top.'

'My Lord. This was the feeling due to the stoppage of Maen Circle. We are now cruising at sub-luminal speed. We are now near Mazol.' Zoro remarked.

'What?' Dharma did not realize that he had spent almost forty-eight Earth days on this spaceship. Most of the time, he had spent learning the art of telepathy. 'Can we go to the command room?' Dharma requested.

'Sure, my Lord.' Zoro said. He commanded, and soon Zoro and Dharma were beamed inside the command room.

Dharma found it mesmerizing. He could see the entire space with stars all around. Some are bright, some not so bright. The night sky, in all its majesty, was in front of Dharma. The glasses, which showed only bright luminous radiance, now had given way to the beautiful galactic space. He could see various stars scattered all around.

'Why did we not see the stars and this kind of surround last time when we were in the command centre. I could see only glasses and mirrors and bright radiance. This is such a beautiful view. We should have seen this before.' Dharma questioned.

'My lord, last time we came here, we were cruising at 7000 times light speed under the protection of Maen Circle. Without the Maen circle, it is impossible to undertake such a journey. Now we have to slow down, so the speed is hardly a Khu per Kel, around seven and a half per cent light speed.'

'Oh. Ok. So, we were in some kind of bubble. Maen circle. Thus, we could not see anything. Otherwise, also I know if you travel at super-luminal speeds, you could not see the stars as you see in the night sky.' Dharma concluded.

'True, my Lord. But now we are near Mazol. We have to slow down, or else our momentum will take us past our destination. We have slowed down drastically, and hence the tingling feeling.' Zoro explained.

'Interesting. Can you show Mazol or its stellar system?' Dharma said, pointing towards the screen, now showing a live feed of outer space. The stars, as were visible to a person watching from a planet, could be seen laid before Dharma.

'Sure, my Lord.' Zoro telepathized and soon gave a command to Janak 290.

Dharma could see two massive black holes orbiting each other. Dharma was surprised; where was this planet Mazol.

'Sire, the planet Mazol is in a stellar system which orbits the centre of gravity created by these two blackholes.' Zoro explained.

'What? That is quite surprising. I have never heard of such a stellar system during my Earth stint.' Dharma exclaimed.

'But sire, Mazol is such a planet. It is the only planet in its solar system. It revolves around its sun, which revolves around the centre of gravity created by the two black holes. There is a purpose why Prof. Boro chose this place as our hideout.' Zoro explained further.

'Planet near two massive black holes. There should be some compelling reason.' Dharma telepathized to Zoro.

'Yes, sire. You will learn about *Arepo* waves. These are used for communication and can travel at Lauy speeds. Lauy speed is around one and half million times faster than light.'

'I am mesmerized. One and half million times faster than light.' Dharma said. 'You should have given me the book on superluminal travel rather than the history of Eritrea.'

'Sire, Prof. Boro will answer all your technical queries, believe me.' Zoro said with an innocent look at his business-like face. The gem on his forehead glittered as if to convey Zoro was anxious.

'I understand. These *Arepo* waves can travel at infinitely fast speeds. How it explains Mazol as a destination for hide out.' Dharma queried.

'Because evil Nokoevid is behind Prof. Boro's life. He would send his probes all over the galaxy to search for Prof. Boro. However, Mazol is so protected that any *Arepo* wave would get distorted due to these massive blackholes, and Nokoevid would never learn about Prof. Boro.' Zoro explained.

'Hmm. But now we are travelling in this spaceship towards Mazol, won't we give away our position.' Dharma was still suspicious.

'We may sire, but there are very many spaceships travelling across the galaxy. It would be very tough to single us out.' Zoro responded with reasons.

'Understood. Prof. Boro and his team hid at Mazol and waited till the time was ripe, as per Bof, to get me from the Earth. And now you believe I will defeat Nokoevid and give you back Eritrea.' Dharma hurriedly said.

'Yes, my Lord.' Zoro nodded.

Dharma could not believe this. The only plan Prof. Boro had was to just hide on some planet under the sanctuary of massive black holes and wait for an Earthling to liberate them from such a tormentor who had the capability of sending probes across the galaxy. There might be something seriously wrong with these people. Bof was dope.

"We are landing at Mazol." Janak 290 telepathized.

Dharma did not realize how time had just vanished, and he was now going to meet the fabled Prof. Boro. The majestic spherical starship landed at Mazol. Zoro telepathized to Dharma, 'Welcome to Mazol, the sire. The place from where you shall be starting your journey. You are going to embark upon the majestic ride to liberate Eritrea. The Bof prophesy is now going to come true.'

Dharma felt uncomfortable with the thought but overcame his inner fears and asked, 'Shall you be beaming us out, or do we have to walk ourselves out.'

'Sire, you have to walk out because Janak 290 could only beam you within the starship.' Zoro responded.

'Just kidding. After you – my friend.' Dharma jovially said and gestured with his two hands to Zoro to lead.

Zoro and Dharma came out of the starship, and soon Dharma found himself in a strange land. It seemed like a big jungle with huge trees and patches of barren land. It was difficult to describe, and Dharma would not have believed that there could be a planet near black holes which had greenery and barren land almost adjacent.

The environment was warmer, but the atmospheric pressure was near Earthlike, and there must be enough oxygen in the air, as Dharma was not feeling any discomfort. Was it due to this picabot dress that the air pressure was neutralized, Dharma thought. He was following Zoro, and it seemed they had been walking for around an Earth hour. Dharma did not know if he was such a fabled son of God why nobody was there to welcome him. He never expected this kind of greeting once the starship landed. Soon, Dharma could see a poorly built house.

Dharma could see that it was not something a technologically superior race would have attempted. This anachronism of a building seemed made by creatures who were novices in civil engineering.

'My brother, you don't know how happy I am today. Finally, I can see you in person.' It seemed someone telepathically said something to Dharma, a woman who was a middle-aged lady wearing a white gown and a golden helmet making her look elegant and royal. She was walking out of the structure in the direction of Dharma with open arms, seemingly to hug him.

Dharma walked towards her and hugged her coldly.

'The son of God, our Saviour, has finally reached. Very soon, Eritrea will be liberated from the evil occupation of Xorians.' said Zoro ecstatically.

Dharma could not understand that this lady was waiting in this house for Dharma. The furniture, the walls, and the surroundings in no way suggested that this was the handiwork of a powerful alien race. It looked like a poorly constructed house of brick and stone. 'If it is not too rude, may I ask who you are?' Dharma telepathized to the lady. Though Dharma had not yet learnt the art of one-to-one communication or hiding his thoughts from others, even Zoro received Dharma's message.

'I am your cousin's sister. You may say that I am your elder sister. We are family.' The lady telepathized. She further messaged directly to Dharma, 'And I am impressed that you have learnt the art of cerebral communication while in your journey. You indeed are sharp.'

'Thanks a lot.' Dharma folded his hands in namaste.

'She is Lady Tara, my Lord. She is your first cousin. She was waiting for you here.' Zoro telepathized to Dharma.

Dharma had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he was missing his family and life on Earth, but on the other hand, he felt a sense of purpose and necessity. These people had high faith in him. They believed he could be the one who could liberate Eritrea. Dharma knew in his heart that this was an impossible task. But now was not the moment of fragility. It was the time to embrace destiny with full vigour. He decided to give his best shot. His energy was now felt by Zoro and Lady Tara.

On the one hand, Dharma was getting ready to embrace his destiny. Far away from Dharma, on the planet of Eritrea, Dharma's nemesis had got the sniff of Boro's hiding. Dharma did not know that he would always be on a constant run in the coming times. In the beautiful Cloud City building, which was a floating building piercing the clouds—thus the name—in the central room, cyborg Dias had sought the appointment of the Supreme Commander of the Xorian Empire—the Great Lord Nokoevid.

'Sir, the news is confirmed.' telepathized cyborg Dias to the Supreme Commander Lord Nokoevid.

'Are you sure?' Nokoevid was cold as ever.

'Yes, sir. My spies have spotted the evil Professor. He was hiding in planet Mazol for so long,' Dias continued.

'But if he is so far away, how is he managing the show. It is very difficult to manage such a rebellion from there. What are his funding sources? I guess the Merkels are behind it.' Nokoevid was furious.

'Sir, those details I don't have yet. But it is confirmed, Boro, the kingpin of the terrorist organization 'The Believers,' is at Mazol with some of his aides.' Dias responded.

'Mazol. If I am not mistaken, it is more than a ten Tymlight (1000 light years) away from Eritrea.' Nokoevid telepathized. He was looking a bit surprised.

'It is a planet situated near two giant black holes. He chose that place to dodge our probes, or he believes that those dunderheads Mazolian can help his cause.' Dias telepathized confidently.

'Ok. Then you have my permission, Dias. Take our 23rd Fleet of Category 4 fighters, destroy anything which comes in between and bring me that stupid Professor. I want to end this stupid rebellion, 'The Believers of Bof'.' Nokoevid commanded in an incensed tone.

'I will do that, Sir.' Cyborg Dias confirmed. He hesitantly continued. 'But sir, you know that planet Mazol is ten Tymlight away from our farthest military post on the moon 'Nora' of planet John as well as from here the planet of Eritrea. It will take us a huge time before we can reach there. Therefore, if you permit, I have a simpler idea.'

Nokoevid was a short-tempered person. He was a middle-aged giant Namuh (advanced human types of Xor) with six feet four inches in height and a well-toned body mass. His personality was such that anyone, be it natural or artificially intelligent being, would come in awe of his stature. He was the most intelligent and knowledgeable person in the known Galaxy of Fran. His intelligence quotient was the benchmark, and others were evaluated on that basis. Nokoevid could think and conceptualize the complex concept of astrophysics, which others with sophisticated equipment struggle.

But these nightmares didn't let him live in peace. He, by the very fact that Boro's name was uttered, went into deep thought. He again was seeing the two parallel events unfolding. On the one hand, Boro beaming away with his son, and on the other, his father, Ralf, is condemned to death by the very people whom Ralf served till his last breath. The two devilish moments which had shaped Nokoevid's life.

'Sir …' Cyborg Dias telepathized hard to bring Nokoevid back from his deep deliberations. Dias could realize that whatever Nokoevid was thinking about was not pleasant.

'We have Anion ships that too Prime 4, then what is the problem.' Nokoevid commanded. He was not someone to show his emotions.

'My Lord, we have not built the Quanion Super Space beyond Eritrea or Noora. It would take Franc's time (two Earth months) to reach Mazol.'

'But why. I have already sanctioned for laying the Quanion Bricks till one Tylight.'

'Sir, the SCO (Space Civil Office) has started the process. But we are concentrating on building the Quanion Super Space Way towards Merkel as strategically it would have made more sense. But this rebel has chosen just the opposite direction.'

'I don't want excuses.'

'No sir was not giving any. It seems terrorist Boro knew that we were not concentrating on this side of the cosmos and thus chose Mazol. It is far, and there is a battery of huge black holes surrounding Mazol; thus, reaching Mazol is a time taking exercise. Reaching Mazol quickly is not easy for any space force, including Nonpareil Soldiery.' Dias telepathized.

'So, what do you suggest?' Nokoevid was getting impatient.

'Anions cannot reach there faster, but the *Arepo* waves can. I have my web of spies across all known bodies in this galaxy, Fran. If you permit, I will activate them. They will kill that traitor and confirm us about his death.' Dias was clear with his plan.

'No, I don't want him to get killed like this. It will make him a hero. Arrest him. We will try him for sedition and, in that process, tarnish his image.'

'Ok, Sir. I will do two things simultaneously. I will order the 23rd fleet of Nonpareil Soldiery, which is here at Eritrea, to march towards Mazol and signal my confidante in Mazol to get full details of Boro and ensure that Boro is caught as soon our soldiers land at Mazol.' Cyborg Dias was ecstatic. Nokoevid had a reputation for not listening to anyone.

'But if you have people in Mazol, why can't they catch hold of Boro?' Nokoevid enquired.

'My Lord, because they are spies, trained in spotting people, may occasionally kill, but they cannot expose themselves. If they try to arrest Boro and his gang, they will be exposed. Mazol is still enemy territory for us.' Dias telepathized.

'Ok. Do whatever is required. But I need this Boro arrested and brought to Xor for trial quickly.' Nokoevid dictated.

'My brother, you seem worried. Don't be. You are now at the right place. You belong here with all of us.' Telepathized the lady.

She saw that Dharma was still confused. She held Dharma's hand and continued, 'You are the lord of Eritrean people; you are worshipped as the son of God who is going to liberate these innocent people who, for such a long time, are under the grasp of that pure evil Nokoevid. Remember you have an ardent duty to this land, this society, and these people.' The lady telepathized in a serious tone.

Dharma understood one thing the people here needed him. Though he was a mere mortal with no powers whatsoever, he had never fought a battle, but his presence here was helpful for a more significant cause. Also, he remembered the last words of his parents, who directed him to be at this place and help the people there. He thought it to be a *fait accompli*.

'I guess you all have to tell me the story in full. How I was brought up in a completely different world. What is this world?' Dharma telepathized to both. He was slowly getting better in the art of cerebral communication but still couldn't control it in *personam*. His thoughts were relayed in *rem*.

'That's true, my Lord.' Zoro telepathized. 'However, till the time you are educated about everything, we have a request.' Zoro's tone was business-like and purposeful.

'What?' Dharma questioned. He did not know what kind of help he could offer.

'You are not going to meet anyone other than us and our mentor Professor Boro whom we will meet shortly. Because other than us, no one else should know that the son of God is back in this world till the time is ripe.' Zoro said.

Dharma was now confused, but he had to learn about this mystery. Why would these people like him be declared as a son of God in a completely foreign land? What was the advantage? Who were these people? Why did they want to lie about his existence? Many questions were perplexing Dharma.

'I know that these questions are going to bother you for some time. Don't worry; you will get the answer to each of these questions.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'No. I do not doubt both of you. It is just that I am confused.' Dharma responded in an apologetic tone.

'We know, my Lord. Don't worry. You should know the truth the earliest.' Zoro politely telepathized.

'Let's go to Professor Boro at the earliest. My Lord and My Lady, I will request you to come with me to the teleporting room.' Zoro telepathized and gestured through hand to the direction where the two were supposed to go.

Dharma and Lady Tara followed.

This was a strange claret room. A small ten by ten feet room where sunlight could barely enter. It was dimly lit with an artificial lighting source. It reminded Dharma of old-type elevators that they used back on Earth. All three entered the room, and then Zoro gave the mental command, and the room from all sides started shrinking. Dharma couldn't realize what was happening. It seemed they all would be crushed to death. But before he could understand anything, the room started to expand and converted itself into a transparent coruscating room.

'Come, my child.' Another telepathic message appeared, and this time it was from an aged person who may be around 70–75 Earth years old. He was dressed in a white shirt, black pants and a white coat. He was similarly dressed to the people Dharma had seen on his own planet Earth.

'Haha. Don't worry. You will see many people dressed in similar attire as I am, and there are many in a gown and varied fashions. The dressing sense here differs from individual to individual. More so, these are picabots clothes and can be changed by a simple mental command to any other fashion.' the old man telepathized.

I don't understand how everyone can read my mind. I have to learn the trick of the trade soon. Wondered Dharma.

'Because we communicate through mental waves, unlike you, who does it through the vocal cord. So, we can understand your mental waves. This is the way we can even communicate with lesser beings. You will, too, evolve to this level shortly; more so, your presence here will hasten it up. One more thing; just to impress you, Zoro has taken special training to speak through vocal cords, which is an ancient way of communication.' telepathized the old man.

Dharma wondered if this was the fabled Prof. Boro. He seemed to be the leader of all these mysterious people around him.

'Yes. I am Professor Boro. I specialize in astrophysics. I am the third person about whom Zoro spoke to you just a few moments back.' the old person telepathized. 'Before you start wondering more, it is better that we tell you things from the beginning.' Professor Boro carried on.

'But remember one thing, though we are at present on the planet of Mazol, which is kind of safe, we never know; there can be spies everywhere. Hence, we must be on our guard. Your existence shall not be disclosed till the right time comes.' Professor Boro telepathized in a serious tone. 'Therefore, you should be ready to move quickly on the slightest suspicion, and we shall teleport ourselves to different safe houses.' Boro continued. 'You be on your toes all the time.'

Dharma was now even more perplexed. People here could read minds, send telepathic messages and were on the run.

'Don't worry, my brother. Professor Boro is going to end all your curiosities.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'So, son, what is your name.' Professor Boro telepathized.

'You can read my mind, but then why can't you find my name.' Dharma was confused.

'Because we can only read what is currently in your mind. No one can know what is in your subconscious mind.' Telepathized Boro.

'My name is Dharma. I have come from planet Earth. Back on Earth, our names have certain meanings like mine meant - righteousness,' Dharma said.

'Dharma, a very well-thought-of name for a noble person like you.' Boro telepathized. 'I know you have learnt the art of telepathy during your journey. I guess you should now start using it. This way, you will get better at it with practice.'

'I surely will. However, I have loads of doubt based on my experiences in the past few days or Kel as you call it.' Dharma telepathized. Though he was finding it difficult to control it. It was telepathized to all present around.

'I know. I will end all your doubts. But before that let me tell you about your travel. You were on Earth when Zoro met you first.' Boro telepathized.

A visual picture of the Milky Way galaxy came in front of Dharma. He could see the vision of the Milky Way galaxy, and soon he saw the solar

system near the Sun's heliosphere. He could see the outermost part of the perihelion of planet Sedna's colossal orbit.

'Somewhere here, which is almost eighty AU away from your Sun, is a bridge or, you may say, a traversable wormhole.' Boro continued with his monologue.

'Yes, I can receive your visions, but I can't see any wormhole. I can see planet Sedna going further away in orbit.' Dharma responded.

'Now, just focus on the orbit of Sedna, and it will take a very peculiar curve; this is where you will spot a black dot, which is just a visual creation by me to explain to you that this is a wormhole made up of material which due to limited technological advancement on Earth is not yet discovered. Earthling refers to such undiscovered material as dark matter.' Boro explained.

'This is the place from where you can commute between your Universe and our Muverse. What Zoro has done is he has taken you from your planet through this wormhole to this planet Mazol because this wormhole serves many purposes, including being a door between these two universes.' Boro concluded.

'Zoro said, and I believe he beamed me at some super-fast speed from Earth to the spaceship Janak 290.' Dharma asked suspiciously.

'That's true. Because in your house is a "*Zeacon*" teleporter, which was given to your parents last time Zoro met them. We have such superior teleporters which, when connected to each other through "*Zeacon*" waves, can teleport both living and non-living organisms without any damage or loss during transmission.' Boro telepathized.

Dharma was even more confused, but he had himself seen how he beamed inside the Nifty– Janak 290 and, a few moments back, was teleported from a red room to a bright sunny room where they were still standing.

'You are thinking how faster-than-light travel is possible.' Boro continued.

'Ya. A kind of. Because as per the physics, I know the speed of light is the max that can be achieved.' Dharma said, looking a bit puzzled.

'There are many things which can travel much faster than the speed of light, including *Zeacon* waves. Mind you, the '*Zeacon*' waves are not the fastest. In fact, they may figure near the slowest travel speeds in the overall scheme of things. We will discuss this specifically sometime later.' Boro concluded.

'Now you rest, Dharma. We will continue our discussion later.' Lady Tara telepathized.

But before Dharma could reply, 'We don't have time, Tara. Let's bring him to speed so that he understands what to do. He has to do so much with such little time in hand.' Boro intervened.

'Yes, even I can't relax unless I know what is going on.' Dharma telepathized to all.

'So, I was saying that you were on planet Earth and from there, through this wormhole created out of what you call dark matter and transported to a new universe called Muverse. Here, most of the laws of physics are like your universe, including the speed of light.' Boro carried on with his lecture. He had donned the avatar of the Professor who was taking a lecture at the Louve University of Lumina at Lux Fulgor in Eritrea.

Dharma got surprised. How this person in an alien world knew about the physical laws of Earth. But Dharma concentrated on the topic. He didn't want to cloud his mind with unnecessary things.

Boro read Dharma's thought, but instead of countering, he continued, 'You are aware that Bof prophesied that the son of God would be sent to Earth, and therefore we had to monitor that place where we are sending such an important person. Our Lord. Isn't it logical?'

'It is. Thus, you were aware of all my moments on Earth.' Dharma wondered.

Boro responded sharply, 'We were monitoring you with the help of the vector given to your pseudo parents at Earth, though it was not constant.'

'Ok. I understand now that you were in touch with my parents. Therefore, you have come to pick me up exactly when you felt the time is ripe.' Dharma mumbled as if he was talking to himself.

'Yes. But do you know the scientific reason that I believe why your stint on Earth is most crucial for us?' Boro questioned.

'I would love to know.' Dharma telepathized in a curious tone.

'You know that we have advanced scientifically much ahead of an Earthling.' Boro again raised a question before Dharma.

'Yes, I totally agree. This dress that I am wearing itself is a simple example. At Earth, we haven't reached a stage where a single dress would last forever and would change with a simple mental command.' Dharma responded.

'This means there is something that Earth stint could provide that we don't have. Otherwise, it doesn't make sense to risk sending the most

important person, the fabled son of God of ours, to Earth.' Boro was looking mysterious while telepathizing to Dharma.

'I agree. There had to be some deeper purpose.' Dharma said instantly. He forgot to telepathize. He uttered the words.

'So, the answer to this is Quaintium, ' Boro revealed as if he had uncovered a mystery.

Dharma was confused. This professor was hinting that a newly born baby was shoved to an altogether different world to learn about something—some Quaintium. Dharma had no idea about it. Surely if that was the purpose, it had failed. Dharma had not even heard about this Quaintium, let alone understand or master it. Did this mean these aliens would let him go back to Earth? Dharma had some ominous feelings about the situation.

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## CHAPTER 4

# The Revelation

Boro understood the dilemma of Dharma. He continued, nonetheless. "The Earthling hardly knew 5–7% of their universe. The baryonic matter. Is it right?" Boro questioned Dharma.

'Yes. We hardly know anything about our universe. Though it is not only baryonic matter, there is other stuff too, but you may conclude that we know awfully less about our universe and what it stores in its vast bounds.' Dharma conceded.

'Rest your call as dark matter or dark energy, based on limited understanding about that stuff.' Boro was piercing in his approach.

'True.' Dharma accepted.

'Now, if I say that we, the Fran galaxy races and civilizations, know a substantial part of our galactic material, will that surprise you.' Boro was constantly questioning Dharma.

'No. Looking at your technological advancement and given the fact that I was brought here in a vessel with an alleged speed of 7000 C, I have no room to doubt what you suggest.' Dharma admitted.

'But still, we need you. Because what we could not decipher is something that only you can decipher.' Boro telepathized, but his tone sounded mysterious.

Boro continued, 'That's why your stint at Earth was crucial. That stint had empowered you with the requisite skill to discover the Quaintium.' Boro remarked as if he had made a master stroke of an argument.

'I am still confused. Sorry for my ignorance and naivety.' Dharma telepathized in an apologetic tone.

'Don't be contrite, my dear son of God. Speak up.' Boro responded.

'If you think my stint at Earth was crucial, I am not clear how you have breached the fundamental principle that light speed is the cosmological

constant. And what about time paradoxes when you move at such high speed.' Dharma queried.

'Well, my dear son of God, let me explain. At first, you have not discovered many things which exist in your cosmos. There are many, and let me again say many, materials which naturally travel faster than light. Like *Arepo* waves, *Pure* waves, *Stealth* waves etc., by nature are made up of elements which can only travel far greater than light speed.' Boro replied calmly.

'Oh, so these materials help you in making super-luminal vessels. But what about time paradoxes.' Dharma quizzed.

'We have Tymex measures. These are dynamic time measurements. They adjust accordingly. So, one month on Earth may be just a few minutes at planet Mazol. The paradoxes occur to you at Earth cause you have not devised dynamic time measure like Tymex.' Boro responded.

Dharma was utterly puzzled. He did not know what to say. Though he understood that these people had developed measures of time which were unique and also discovered many materials that travel faster than light speed.

It was now Prof. Boro's turn to slip into the role of Professor. Lady Tara knew that Prof. Boro could not only explain the super-luminal travels but would satisfactorily answer the questions Dharma had. Something was telling Tara that Dharma would have had many queries to ask.

'Let me explain to you the eleven super-luminal ways of travel.' Boro telepathized in a purposeful tone. His tone and demeanour were such that he meant business. He had always been a wonderful teacher, and his students regarded him as one of the best teachers in the entire galaxy. Dharma was ecstatic. He was interested in knowing these technicalities.

'First is *Arepo* waves. These are the fastest till now in the known Muverse. They can travel at Lauy Speed, equivalent to one and half million times faster than the speed of light.'

Dharma was mesmerized by learning about the speed at which these waves could travel.

'These waves are used to communicate with distant places. This is how all the highly intelligent races communicate. They are non-encrypted signals and are used for public messages.' Boro continued.

'I am already mesmerized by *Arepo* Waves. Anything that can travel at such speed seems impossible. I don't understand the technique fully.' Dharma said.

'Because you are bogged down with the physical laws of Earth. There you have discovered just nothing about this kaleidoscopic world. Nevertheless, without going into the technicalities, *Arepo* waves which are a completely different phenomenon than anything you have ever noticed at Earth, are the fastest travelling particles we have yet discovered in our Muverse.'

'Something can travel so much faster than light looks like a dream.' Dharma was agog.

'*Arepo* waves are the fastest, but there are other massless waves such as *Pure* Waves, *Stealth* Waves, and *Zeacon* Waves, which for your understanding, you may equate to your radio or electromagnetic waves. They also travel at super-luminal speed.' Boro continued.

'These are mass-less travels. I could understand that there may be certain material in even our universe which may travel faster than light and could be used for communication purposes. But how come mass travel at such super-luminal speed is possible. Though I have experienced it, I want to learn about the technicality.' Dharma was curious.

'That is true. There are seven different ways of such travels that we have discovered now. The first of them is Anion Ships on Quanion super space way. If you build a super space-way with Quanion and have the ship built with Quanion, the matter repels each other with a such fierce energy that your spaceship will travel many times faster than the speed of light and could achieve a max speed of 28.8 Tylight.' Boro telepathized. He then added, 'Equivalent to 72,000 times faster than light.' Boro realized that Dharma might not be accustomed to appreciating the enormity of the speed with Tymex measures alone.

'I am super curious to learn this. What is Quanion?' Dharma enquired.

'See, you know even your universe is expanding faster than the speed of light.' Boro telepathized.

'Yes, initially, after the big bang, everything expanded much faster than the speed of light.' Dharma said.

'But the universe is still expanding.' Boro continued.

'Yes'.

'So, do you know the speed at which your universe is expanding?'

'I don't know. But you may be correct. The expansion can be beyond the speed of light. Though the limit that nothing can go faster than the speed of light applies to space-time within the universe and not to universe.' Dharma added to confront what Boro was saying.

'Agreed. I simply ask a question that your universe is expanding, and I am not saying that any law of physics prevents the universe from expanding at any speed. There is nothing like the speed of light is the cosmic limit. Like your universe is expanding, our universe, i.e. Muverse, is expanding at a much faster speed. Now the question is what is responsible for this. The answer is Quanion. Quanion is an exotic matter which follows anti-catenation.'

'Anti-catenation.' Dharma quizzed.

'Opposite to catenation. Unlike carbon bonds which can form a bond with another, Quanion can in no case form bond with itself.'

'Oh. Ok.'

'Quanion repels another Quanion atom, and due to such repulsion, an enormous energy is generated, and this huge energy then gives birth to a new Quanion atom, and this repulsion creates the impression of expanding Muverse. Because Quanion is a material unseen by you or the people of Earth and the energy generated by Quanion cannot be fathomed by you, you call these things dark matter and dark energy.' Boro continued.

'Okay. So Quanion repels each other, and this repulsion not only helps Muverse in expanding but also gives lots of energy which is responsible for the production of new Quanion. It is kind of zero-sum game then.'

'No. The entire energy generated by the Quanion repulsion is not used in making new Quanion but only a limited fraction. Rest remains in Muverse as energy which at times is responsible for keeping galaxies in shape.' Boro was firm in his response. He continued, 'So by making a super spaceway through this Quanion, we can ensure that our Anion Ships can travel much faster than light.'

'But if you create a Quanion highway, won't the two Quanion atoms themselves repel each other.'

'No, because between the two Quanion, there is another matter', Lequaff' which the Quanion doesn't repel. Then we make Anion ships which are also made up of Quanion or at least the hull, and then these ships get repelled when on the Quanion super space way and huge energy is generated in the process. This tremendous energy is again channelized to help in many things like generating new Quanion atoms, and further, by using the material 'Lequaff,' we use this tremendous energy to energize the ship and the weaponry in the ship.'

'I have a doubt.' Dharma said.

'I know. You are wondering how this faster-than-light travel is not creating the time paradoxes you might have heard of on Earth.' Boro telepathized.

'Yes.'

'To understand that, you need to know the science behind it.' Boro responded.

'I understand why time paradoxes happen.' Dharma objected.

'Then let's understand what you know.' Boro peevishly replied.

'If from Earth a spaceship travels to another planet, at say three-quarters of light speed. The Earth sends, say, after two years, an instantaneous (faster than light) FTL message to the ship. The ship responds too with instantaneous FTL to destroy the FTL transponder. Now this instantaneous message would receive by the Earth station one year before. Cause of relativity.'

'So, what you are saying is that in Earth's timeline, at zero years, the spaceship starts its journey. After one year, the Earth receives a message from a ship to destroy the instantaneous FTL transponder. Earth destroys that. Still, at two years, it sends an FTL message to ship. Because the ship has responded to that message. It causes causality problem.' Boro completed what Dharma started.

'Right. Therefore, these time paradoxes would never allow any FTL.' Dharma ecstatically concluded. He was elated that he had proved the great scientist of a parallel universe wrong. Or he thought so.

'Well, my dear son of God. You just had travelled.' Boro grinned while telepathizing.

'Yes. That is my confusion.' Dharma replied.

'Because you didn't pay attention to Tymex measure.' Boro retorted.

'Tymex measure!!' Dharma quizzed.

'Yes. What if I say that time is dynamic? One year on a spaceship is two years on Earth. Time changes with spatial distances. The time at a given point of space is different from the time at another spatial point.' Boro revealed.

Dharma was shocked. He was still trying to understand what Boro was establishing.

Boro continued with a vision that was telepathized to Dharma. 'Imagine the spaceship sent an instantaneous FTL message; the timeline of this message would be one year at the spaceship, but the moment it reaches

Earth, the message timeline changes. It is now two years of Earth time. That is Tymex measure.'

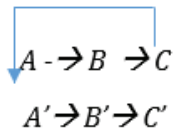
Dharma could see the vision that the spaceship had sent a message to destroy the FTL transponder, but the message, despite being sent instantaneously, reached Earth after the message from Earth was sent. So, the destruction of the FTL transponder on Earth was after the message was relayed.

'It is complicated.' Dharma responded in awe.

'I know. Let's not get into it.

'But my question is still unanswered. What about the time dilation? Not only causality. I have learnt on Earth that if someone goes faster than light, the time dilates, and at such speed, as you are suggesting, which is 72,000 times of light speed, time will have a negative time.'

'You are correct, Dharma. But you need to understand two things. The first time doesn't become negative. Time is a dimension. So, when you do faster-than-light travel, you also move on to the dimension of time. There is no paradox, as you have seen earlier. Further, visualize this:




'A' at a particular time did some action which resulted in B, which resulted in C. Now from point C, A goes back and does something that will result in B prime, and it will result in C prime. So no paradox. Two parallel streams of events will be created based on the actions. So movement in time is possible. There is no paradox.'

'Okay. Understood. You are saying that when I move back in time and kill my grandfather, I will create a new story, an alternative stream of events where I will not be born. But don't you think these alternative events create parallel universes? One in which I am borne and another where I am not due to my killing my grandfather.'

'No Dharma. There are two separate things. One is in a universe creating multiple worlds or realms based on the action, and another is in a different universe. See, you know that your universe was a singularity; at that time, it was not the only singularity. There were many such singularities, and there were many such universes which may have similar laws of physics

or completely different. So Muverse and Universe are created by two separate singularities. It is possible that in both Muverse and Universe, many parallel realms or worlds exist based on the decisions we have taken.'

'Understood. These are parallel or rather different universes.'

'Yes, Dharma. Time is also a dimension, and one can move in time. But remember Tymex measures. They would allow you to move in time, but causality could not be impacted by the same thread. Though multiple threads could be created.'

'It is slightly confusing, but I got the drift; what was the second thing you said I need to understand?' Dharma said.

'Just note that time exists in multiple states. Like many quanta, atoms are in two states. However, in the interest of time' Boro especially emphasized time while telepathizing his thoughts to Dharma, 'we shall not go too technical on it. You remember that whenever we have to use Anion ship and the Quanion space way to travel, we necessarily have to use Maen Wrap with the help of Maen Circle; you can call it Time Bubble Wrap for your understanding. Otherwise, the travel would have stranger impacts on the on-boarders. But nothing related to time. It would be physical and may even cause the complete annihilation of the on-boarders.'

'What is Time Wrap Bubble and Maen Circle?' Dharma was curious.

'The Anion ships travel in a Maen Wrap or a Time Bubble wrap which doesn't allow, in your words, the time paradoxes to impact the content inside the bubble. It simply means the starship is not impacted or damaged due to the ultra-superluminal speeds. Further, to create and maintain such a Time Bubble, you need tremendous energy that comes from the Maen Circle. Maen is an exotic material which allows the energy rotated through it to double with every rotation. Though it also has a limit, and therefore how far the Anion ships will travel is directly dependent on how much Maen is available at hand. Because on super space way, the Anion ships, which are made up of Quanion, can free flow endlessly. There is no energy requirement, but to maintain the Time Wrap, the Maen Circle is important, and here the availability of Maen material decides the constraints.'

'It is interesting. Thanks for explaining the complex concept in such a simple way.' Dharma instinctively praised Boro for his explanation.

'Flattery always does the trick.' Boro grinned.

'Agreed. But you said there are seven ways of such travels. Anion ships are just one. What about others.' Dharma asked curiously.

'We should not waste too much time on such technical details. Dharma should be told about the basic story so that he can be up to speed on what he has to handle.' Tara telepathized to all and intervened.

'I agree with Tara.' Boro nodded.

'But isn't it possible for you to tell me in brief about others? I promise I will not ask any counter-questions. I really am curious what can be other six ways of faster than light travel.' Dharma pleaded.

'Ok. But I will explain in brief, and we will have a deeper discussion on these technologies later.' Boro telepathized.

Tara was not happy, but she did not want Dharma to get dissuaded. He was now taking a keen interest. It was in all of their interest that Dharma knew about these technical details.

'Second is the highest possible speed in Muverse of anything. This you may call the Cosmological limit, and it applies across parallel universes. Even the presumed God-like seven-dimensional Etherian cannot cross this barrier, and no Time Wrap Bubble and nothing can hold true beyond this limit for mass-based travel. For anything that has a Mass unlike the *Arepo* waves, the cosmological constant is 288 Tylight, which is equivalent to 720,000 times light speed.'

'720,000 C. This is enormous. If I do a quick calculation, this will mean that I can travel the entire solar system's diameter in just 1 second.' Dharma said.

'You have a very sharp mind, Dharma. We are so dependent on technology that even such simple math we cannot do without the help of tools.' Tara applauded Dharma's mental strength.

'And my lord is absolutely correct. I just checked. 720,000 times light speed means approximately 216 billion kilometres in one second, and the diameter of the solar system where planet Earth is situated is roughly 280 billion kilometres.' Zoro added to the conversation.

'Thanks a lot. But it was just a simple thing. It was just an approximate calculation.' Dharma was feeling embarrassed about this praise for something so trivial. 'Let's continue, Prof. Boro.'

'This hyper speed is called Inter-Dimensional Lasagna. This technique at present is only available in theory for us but is real for the Etherian. Here the hypothetical material called IDL is used to create a catapult, and it pushes the mass to the 7th Dimension. There, the mass travels from point A to point B, and after arriving at point B, it is pulled back to the 3rd Dimension space with the help of the same catapult. This gives the

3rd-dimensional observer a view that the mass has gone into a cosmic lasagna and later, at a very distant point, has come out of the lasagna. This can be at the max speed of 288 Tylight. This is the speed one can achieve in the 7th-dimensional space. In our belief, the Etherian, who are 7-dimensional creatures, sometimes take the shape of a 3-dimensional character and visit us, and they use this technique to travel faster than anyone of us. That's why we call them God-like.' Boro telepathized.

'I know I said I will not ask any questions. But this thing has perplexed me.' Dharma said.

'Don't worry, Dharma. I know what your doubts are. I will answer all of them when we continue our story.' Tara intervened and telepathized before Boro could say anything.

'Thanks, Tara. How do you know about this travel when you have yourself not witnessed that. It is merely science fiction, then.' Dharma expressed his doubt.

'No, it is not science fiction. Our Fran Galaxy has civilizations like Thyzer, Merkel, Xor, Eritrea, Mazol and Ether. In this civilization, Ether, a seven-dimensional being, we have had communication. Though rarely and briefly. Thus we know how IDL travel is possible for them. We cannot be moved into the 7th Dimension without material change in our physical constitution. But it doesn't mean this travel cannot exist. To give an analogy, for a lowly creature like, say, an ant on Earth, it is unfathomable how any creature can fly in space and reach another planet. It cannot be explained to their brain. But that doesn't mean it is not true.' Tara telepathized in a very calming tone.

'The third such travel is through Paras Mann dissembler.' Boro continued without waiting for Dharma to respond. 'Here, two eccentric materials, Paras and Mann, are used. The coordinates of place A and place B are set. Then by using Paras, the mass is converted into energy, and then this energy is sent to the other coordinate at a speed as high as 156 Tylight, equivalent to 390,000 times light speed. Thereby using the Mann element, the energy is converted back into the same mass. The limitation here is that this travel is possible only for non-living masses. Life, as we all visualize and know it, cannot be converted into such a form of pure energy.'

Boro paused for some time to see whether Dharma had any queries. Though now Dharma had learnt his lessons. He didn't want to disturb the flow by unnecessarily getting into too many technical details.

'So in both IDL travel and Paras Mann travel, the need for Time Wrap Bubble doesn't exist. You don't waste the material Maen on such travels, and thus these travels score over Anion ships. But both these travels have their limitations. IDL is out of the question, and Paras Mann or PM travel is only for non-living stuff.' Boro paused.

'So how does Xor maintain its control over such a vast empire? Because all the three methods of faster-than-light travel that you have suggested have their own limitations.' Dharma started enquiring again.

Tara was distraught. She felt that this discussion was unending. But she thought it better to wait for some time.

'You will get your answers shortly.' Boro telepathized and continued. 'The next in line is Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta. Here a hyperbola is formed when two oppositely charged tachyons with opposite momenta—same magnitude, opposite sign—are reacted within the Maen Circle, allowing infinite energy for propulsion. This can push the speed beyond light speed up to a max speed of three Tylight.'

'Which is 7500 C or 7500 times the speed of light,' Dharma intervened in between.

'You are very sharp, Dharma. But can you tell me when with Anion ships, we can travel at a speed of 72,000 C? Why we need Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta. And mind you, we also need to create the Time Wrap Bubble, and thus we need the Maen element.' Boro thought to test Dharma, who seemed to be a very intelligent and sharp person. Someone who has just come for motley planet Earth but is understanding such a complex concept with such ease.

'This is where you don't have Quanion super space way. This is when suddenly you have to travel to someplace. Like, if there is an attack on this planet and we have to rush in a jiffy, we will not have the luxury of time to create the super space, say. So I will use Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta propelled starship.' Dharma responded with ease.

'You are damn good.' Boro was astonished.

'Precisely, why Prof. Boro has chosen Mazol. Even if, in the unlikely event we are discovered, the Anion ships of Nokoevid are rendered useless. There aint any super space way made this side of cosmos.' Tara intervened.

'So our enemies have no option but to use Tachyon Momenta like my travel from Earth to Mazol was in an HTM-propelled Nifty.' Dharma concluded.

Boro continued, 'Though the speed through HTM propeller is much lesser than Anion travel and thus even the requirement of Maen is less. But nonetheless, Maen circle needs to be forged, which will create the Time Bubble Wrap.'

'But aint warp drives can give much higher speeds than 7500 C.' Dharma again breached his promise by not asking any questions.

'Yes, we have similar warp travel too. It is called travel through Radiant Coil. This is the fifth method of faster-than-light travel. Here a Radiant coil is spread across the space from point A to point B. This coil is like a temporary Quanion super space way, creating a parallel route. Once the coil is placed, then the spaceship can travel in this coil from any points between A and B at a max speed of 80Tylight.'

'Eighty Tylight means 200,000 C is huge. It is much faster than your Anion ships or Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta. Then why did you not explain this to me at first.' Dharma was confused.

'Yes, indeed, this is a super-fast method of travel. But this is not used frequently. Now I leave it to you to tell me the reason.' Boro wanted to test the intelligence of Dharma. Dharma already has proven how sharp he was. But this question seems too difficult for Dharma to even attempt.

'Well, without knowing the technical details, it would be a wild guess if I attempt to answer.'

'Ok. Take a wild guess.' Boro was casual.

'If I recall, the Quanion super space way travel is the most economical and popular space travel. Unlike others such as IDL, which is hypothetical, and PM, which is only for non-living stuff, Tachyon travel is not as fast. What only limits Anion ship is the availability of material Maen, which help in the creation of Time Bubble Wrap.'

'Question was why Radiant Coil is not as popular as Anion ships' Boro cornered Dharma.

'I am coming to that. So Anion Ships are economical and thus popular. But the high-speed Radiant Coil seems to have trouble. First, you have to create this coil. Creating this itself will take lots of time. Thus, the speed of 200,000C will be of no use if one has to spend lots of time creating and maintaining this coil.' Dharma said.

'Well, I appreciate that despite knowing absolutely nothing, you have guessed it somewhat right. You were correct that Anion ships are economical as Quanion atoms are created in the process of the journey itself. Thus, the only constraint there is Maen which also is available in

reasonable abundance. Therefore, they are the most preferred mode of distant travel.' Boro responded and paused to have a deep look at Dharma.

Boro continued, 'Radiant coils are heavy energy guzzlers. The hyperspace is created where the space could be strained so as to contract the coil and bring the two points distant in normal cosmos artificially close. This distance is so negligible that an ordinary spacecraft covers it in no time, and then the coil is allowed to regain its own shape. Like the spring is shrunk and then let go. In the process, the space vehicle reaches its destination. No Maen drive nothing. But these things could not be put on an engine of a space vehicle. The max that a space vehicle can achieve through this space straining or contraction and expansion of space-time is one Tymlight -100C speed. Thus, if you want to cover longer distances, you have to create a hyper-space that could not be shut off, and it required very heavy energy consumption.'

'That could be possible between a few points, but one cannot crisscross the galaxy with such heavy energy-consuming technology. This is not a feasible solution.' Dharma intervened and put across his point of view.

'True Dharma. Therefore, Radiant Coil is not a popular way of space travel. Though the City, Clusters 1–4, and other opulent parts of the Xorian Empire boast such trans-space.'

'This means the only commercially possible and fastest way was the Quanion super space way through Anion ships. Which could achieve a speed of 28.8 Tylight.' Dharma put across his understanding before Boro.

Boro was deeply impressed with the kind of interest Dharma was taking in the technicalities of space travel.

'Then why you sent Janak 290, an HTM propeller ship. You could have sent an Anion ship.' Dharma quizzed.

'Two reasons. First, there aren't any Quanion super space way created beyond Xorian territories. Therefore, from Eritrea to Mazol, there aint much space way, neither I could have created it.' Boro responded.

'But why? If you knew that the time to bring the son of God had come, this was the least that could have been done. I would have reached here much earlier.' Dharma was surprised.

Though Boro noted how Dharma was assuming importance. Just a few moments back, he thought he was a lowly human, but now he was commanding why a complex Quanion super space way was not created to bring him to Mazol on time.

'Because it is the monopoly of Nokoevid. Only Xorian could create SSW, and only they possess Anion ships. No one else. We don't have that technology.' Tara responded to the piercing questions of Dharma.

Dharma was surprised. This meant that Xorian monopolized such super-luminal travel. This meant the only way to defeat Nokoevid was to find a superior technology of travel.

Dharma was perturbed; this meant he not only had to forge a weapon to counter the mighty Qued but need to find out a way to achieve a super-luminal speed of more than 28.8 Tylight. It looks like an impossible task for a lowly Earthling.

Dharma but had embraced the fact that he needed to achieve it somehow.

Boro realized the conflict of Dharma. He continued his monologue, hoping it may pull Dharma out of his suffering, 'Unlike Quanion super-space way which once built, remain built, the Trans-space or the Radiant coil needs to be constantly maintained. You can compare it to the tube or railway structure of planet Earth. The highest sophisticated trains can run at super-sonic speed, but you need to build and maintain infrastructure. You need a constant supply of electricity for such tube infrastructure. Likewise, a constant supply of energy is required for maintaining the Trans-space or Radiant coil. Whereas the Quanion SSW is like the road highway, where once it is built, you need little maintenance. Each and everything has a purpose.'

Dharma summarized, 'Anion ships travel at 70,000 times light speed but need Quanion space way; HTM propelled ships can travel anywhere without any space way but at a max speed of 7500 light speed. Both Anion and HTM ships need the protection of the Time Wrap Bubble created with the help of Maen material. A radiant Coil is a large string created to strain space, primarily for distances within a few hundred light-years or so. Paras-Mann dissembler primarily converts mass into energy and transports mostly non-living stuff. IDL travels through new dimensions. Not possible for three-dimensional species.'

'Good Dharma. You comprehend fast.' Boro ejaculated.

Dharma felt a tinge of embarrassment; he continued, 'But you said there were seven mass-based super-luminal travel modes. And don't you think

that in such travels when you are accelerating to such speed, it would create such high g force that it will just crush all who are onboard?' Dharma was still curious.

'No. In none of the travel above, whether Anion Ships, Hyperbola Momenta or Radiant Coil, there shall be any impact on the on-boarders. The ship's outer area and the inner core are separated from each other by the use of Miln water. Available on various planets in abundance. This has a unique characteristic of absorbing such force. So all these ships shall have a simple construction. An inner body that shall be like any other passenger plane or rocket's inside body, as you are aware. Then the Miln water flows and then the outer body. Just be mindful that Miln is flammable water. So, if you can ignite it, the entire ship will be singed. And thus the Miln is covered with the outer layer of pure liquid Nitrogen so as to ensure it doesn't combust accidentally.' Boro was in the complete mood to give a lecture to his student. He has donned the avatar of a professor of astrophysics, something which he has not done since he left Louve University, one of the best Eritrean education centres.

'Prof. we are going too technical, and like this, it will never end.' Tara's patience had run out now.

'I agree with Tara. Let me cut it short.' Boro realized that this was not the time for such substantial technical discussions. 'So let me conclude. The remaining two methods are the Vehemence Gateways, which are almost equivalent to space elevators. They connect between two planets as a physical elevator. But these structures are different from Radiant Coil or Quanion SSW. For example, in both, the structure is very malleable. If something passes through it, it has the flexibility of allowing such passage without disturbing the coil or space-way. Even an entity as big as an asteroid or a moon can pass through such coils/space ways, and these paths are intelligent enough to let the body pass and adjust accordingly. But the Vehemence Gateways are physical structures, and they can be created only when they are not in the way of any other body. They are like the hard elevators.'

'I understood. We have similar structures planned. Mars is our shipyard. So, I can understand the Vehemence Gateway structure. What kind of max speed do they support.' Dharma intervened so that Boro didn't need to explain further.

'1/2 Tylight, which is around 1250 times the light speed.'

'But that is also a tremendous speed. So these Vehemence Gateways are created between two stellar systems so that they can quickly do inter-planetary transportation of goods and living beings.'

'You are really good.' Boro was very happy with the intellectual capabilities of Dharma. 'Indeed, the purpose of this is to facilitate trade in the intra-stellar system, though occasionally you will find few Vehemence Gateways between two nearby stellar systems. You will find many Vehemence Gateways across the Xorian Empire.'

'So what is the last mode? I have understood six modes of travel.' Dharma said.

'Last mode is identifying the natural traversable cosmic bridges; you call them wormholes.' Boro said.

'Naturally traversable wormholes.' Dharma was surprised.

'Yes, like in your universe, in our Muverse, there are many cosmic bridges which are naturally created. They have been here since the beginning of time and connect you to various places in the universe.' Boro telepathized.

'Interesting.' Dharma was trying to digest the complex technical conversation.

'And all these developments, all eleven types of faster than light travels have been discovered in past 1 Tymex period, which is equivalent to 2500 Earth years.' Tara telepathized.

Dharma wondered. How old is civilization, then? Because if they have to grow to such levels, and it had taken them 2500 Earth years prior to that, were they a sole planetary civilization.

'No.' Tara read Dharma's thought and intervened. 'Even earlier, Xorian were a civilization which had its presence felt at many planets, moon and celestial bodies.'

'But they did not have the reach of super-luminal travel. And at sub-luminal speeds, it would be nigh impossible to sustain an inter-stellar civilization.' Dharma questioned.

He could see a grin on Tara and Boro's faces. Dharma realized that the Xorian has been an interstellar civilization for the longest time. His nemesis had a long history of technological advancement. Dharma sulked. Some unknown fear engulfed him. He had to fight a civilization which was much developed and old. Was this his destiny to take on such a powerful adversary? Dharma went into deep thought.

'We may have discovered many of the secrets flowing in this beautiful cosmos, but still, the mother of all secrets, the Quaintium, is elusive for most of us. And you are the one who is going to research upon that energy and help us.' Boro continued. He understood what was going on in Dharma's mind.

'So, you meant to say that Quaintium is something I can decipher when you all could not. And what made you think so. Just because some religious text, I mean, Bof says so.' Dharma telepathized with a pinch of sarcasm.

'Well, Bof says, so that is a valid reason. But to your scientific temper, let me appeal by saying that sometimes when you spend time in a parallel universe, you are accustomed to such physical property, which may make you adept at finding out things which are hidden from the views of others who did not have that benefit. You have the unique combination of internalizing two energies, and you thus could decipher Quaintium.' Boro telepathized more calmly this time.

'I have one query. First of all, how do you know it is Quaintium, and why did you mention that it is elusive for 'most of us' instead of 'all of us'. Dharma pointed out the flaw.

'You indeed are brilliant. I guessed no one other than you could have pointed this out. My dear Dharma, you have guessed it right. Nokoevid has discovered it. He has not only discovered but has made a weapon out of it. The Qued.' Boro revealed.

'So Nokoevid already knows about this Quaintium, and he has successfully made a powerful weapon Qued out of it.' Dharma repeated.

'Yes. That's why if we have to defeat him and end his rule and free Eritrea, you have to not only discover this Quaintium but have to find a counter to Qued. Then only we could free and liberate Eritrea. That is the entire purpose of you being shoved to Earth and now being summoned.' Boro responded.

Dharma did not know what to say. He was confused. These people believed that an Earthling who had absolutely no idea about the complex technologies which these people used on such a regular basis could not only discover an elusive material but could forge a weapon out of it to defeat the mighty Nokoevid. Dharma was not sure whether these people were so naïve or they were pretending to be such.

'Don't be under the impression that we are naïve.' Boro telepathized in an irate tone.

'I am so sorry. I was not just …' Dharma tried to defend but was cut short by Boro, 'No need for excuses or explanation, Earthling.'

Boro downgraded Dharma immediately from the son of God to Earthling, maybe because Dharma himself was doubting his own abilities.

Boro then telepathized in a slightly softer tone, 'Dharma, you need to understand. We all are counting on you. You are the one for whom we have been waiting for ages. Now, if you doubt your abilities, it will not bode well for any of us. We have made sacrifices.'

Dharma understood that there was no sense in self-doubting. He had to believe in the collective belief of people. Irrespective of the fact that he found religious scripture distasteful, but indeed there were followers and believers in them, and he had to respect their sentiments. If Bof said so that he could liberate Eritrea, he needed to follow it. He must believe in his own legend.

'You have read something special on Earth. Our studies tell us that Earthlings have discovered a theory of everything. In that lies our answers.' Boro continued.

Dharma was now trying to recall his recent answers to the complex mathematical questions on eleven-dimensional theory.

'Nice. Recall whatever you have learnt on Earth.' Boro continued. 'tell me that about the eleven-dimensional space. How it could exist. Those experiments, lessons.'

'I can recall that it is believed that every atom ultimately is nothing but a string. It requires bizarrely eleven dimensions to work.' Dharma said.

'Wonderful Dharma. That is where our answers lie. We know for a matter of fact that there exist seven-dimension beings, and thus Qued could be developed only in an eleven-dimensional framework.' Boro was ecstatic. He continued, 'Let me shove you in the cerebral transfer machine and bring you to speed. Then we shall throw you into the cosmos to decipher the Quaintium with the help of your knowledge of astrophysics learnt on Earth amalgamated with our knowledge. We will forge a weapon as powerful as created by the evil Nokoevid.' Boro telepathized in such a tone that made him look as excited as a small child who had discovered something new.

Dharma was perplexed. He was not sure what Prof. Boro was leading to. No one can solve puzzles of physics like this. What kind of revelation was expected from Dharma?

'I can understand. Professor Boro is a genius, but he cannot tell a story.' Lady Tara telepathized. She had understood that the approach taken by Prof. Boro was not correct. Dharma, without any background or idea, could be of no help to the cause.

Tara continued, 'Prof. Boro is too engrossed in his own that he cannot make sense. He has always been like this.'

'I understand. But I am still confused.' Dharma said.

'I will tell you everything. However, before you embark upon your mission to forge a weapon, as Prof. Boro suggested, I feel you should know about history. History is as important as science.' Tara emphasized history. It was meant for Prof. Boro, and he immediately disliked the idea. However, for some unknown reason, Boro did not interfere. He did not want Dharma to not give his hundred per cent and thus agreed with the suggestion of Tara that Dharma should be given the perspective before he was loaded with the complex astrophysical phenomenon.

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## CHAPTER 5

# The Xorian Empire

Tara waited patiently to let Dharma settle. She paced a few steps away from Dharma in the small room. Tara continued, this time it was a monologue from her, 'Before I start this story, let me tell you that due to our cerebral communication, you will understand things per your own perspective. Thus, this story will make you understand our history in the manner you receive it.' Lady Tara was more comforting in her approach.

'Thanks, it would be of great help.' Dharma said.

'Let's start with the basics of our systems.'

'That will help even more.' Dharma telepathized. He was putting in great effort to learn this art of cerebral communication. He could easily feel the benefit of this type of communique. Not only did it do away with the need for language, but it also ensured that the recipient was receiving the message from her or his own perspective.

'This is Muverse.' Tara continued her monologue. 'It is a parallel universe, and the cosmic laws are slightly different than what you might have heard about at Earth.'

'I know, and I also know that you all belong to Fran galaxy, and you have developed faster-than-light travel technology. So not only can you travel faster but communicate much faster than the speed of light.' Dharma intervened.

'True. Our galaxy Fran is ring-shaped. Unlike the majority of galaxies which are mostly spiral or barred spiral shape.' Telepath Lady Tara and showed the vision of Fran galaxy to Dharma. A vision flashed to Dharma with text in the language he could understand. The entire galaxy was shown to him on a miniature-sized map.

Dharma could see a vision of a ring-shaped galaxy with various inter-stellar civilizations marked. He could see Merkel Realm, Xorian Empire,

and various small blue discs which denoted Thyzer, a seven-dimensional demi-god civilization far away marked as Ether. Dharma could hear Tara while the vision was flashing before him.

'This is our galaxy Fran which has a diameter of six Tylight, equivalent to roughly 15000 light years. Its centre is roughly one Tylight, i.e. 2500 light years in diameter, and the outer ring is about 3 Tylight or 7500 light years away from the centre. It is estimated to have 1.5 trillion stars, and Xor is situated at Apsis region 1-8.' Tara continued.

'Apsis region?' Dharma enquired.

'Though we have complex systems for ease of understanding, you may consider that the entire Fran Galaxy is divided into various Apsis regions. It can be equated to various sectors of a circle. Xorian Empire is situated in Apsis region 1–8. These are further divided into grid lines. The horizontal grid is equally divided into fifteen parts, say A to O, each denoting ten Tymlight or 1000 light years and vertically in fifty parts, say 1–50, each denoting a vertical distance of three Tymlight or 300 light years. Let me show you the visuals for easy reference.' Tara telepathized and flashed a new vision.

Dharma could see the entire galaxy filled with various stars, and the same was divided by yellow lines in a grid shape. These latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates were similar to those used on the Earth for depiction in any 2-D map. Soon he saw the galaxy moving away due to the expansion of the universe, but due to the apsis mechanism, the coordinates were shifted to maintain and depict the same point in the universe.

'I understood.' Dharma telepathized. 'These are dynamic coordinates which shift based on the expansion of the universe, and thus they are called apsis region coordinates.'

'Yes. Now you are seeing the Xorian solar system. Various planets and their moons." Tara telepathized.

Dharma could see various planets and their names written in English. The distance from Xor was also mentioned in such terms as Dharma could understand. Dharma couldn't help himself from appreciating this unique way of communication. Tara was communicating her thoughts, and Dharma was receiving them in a way comprehensible to him.

Dharma then saw that the Fran galaxy was divided into the vast Xorian empire, a tiny dot named Eritrea and far away a planet between two giant blackholes–the Mazol. Dharma could see various blue disc-shaped features. Before he could ask, he heard Tara's voice.

'The galaxy is populated by various intelligent and sophisticated civilizations.' Tara continued. 'Mighty Thyzer - the most sophisticated and technological advance civilization, and Merkel's are also no less. We only have had some odd communication with Ether, and in our estimation, it is a seven-Dimensional civilization, and thus for us, three Dimension beings, they are almost God-like. Ether, at times, transforms themselves as a three-dimensional being, and at that time, their major presence is felt in this Ether space.

Further, there is a vast, Mysterious space where all our probes have, to date, failed. Nothing has returned from there. Thyzer, Merkel, and Xor are all inter-stellar civilizations with their span across many celestial bodies. Eritrea and Mazol are single-planet civilizations and thus are referred to as 'Solo'.' Tara paused for a moment.

'Just one thing, Tara, if you have divided the entire Fran galaxy in the alphanumeric grid, then why do you have the Apsis regions.' Dharma enquired.

'Well, Dharma, the galaxy is growing and accelerating constantly. Therefore, these grids won't stand for some time. But the Apsis arch remains as is, and thus the coordinate works, and so does the star ships, AGIs, communication device etc.' Tara telepathized.

'Oh, understood. This is quite helpful in understanding. We are now at Mazol, which is away from the Xorian Empire's limit, whereas Eritrea in the recent past has lost the war to Xor and now is part of its suzerainty though you are trying to liberate it from this evil rule.' Dharma telepathized.

Tara again telepathized another vision to Dharma, where Dharma could see the Xorian Empire, the inner core, the middle core, the outer core, the far boundary and the neo-Xorian territories.

'Kind of.' Tara responded and continued, 'Before talking about the Eritrean control and Xor's rule over Eritrea, we need to understand about Xor. Right now, you are visualizing a huge Xorian Empire. It all started from the planet Xor but then expanded to the inner core, then to the middle circle, outer circle, and far boundary and beyond that area is known as a neo-Xorian territory. It is a vast empire and a huge civilization. Ishan and Alibri Stellar System, as well as John/Durva and X141, are the outermost boundaries. Now even Eritrea is within the capture of Xor.'

'This is a huge empire. But this all is controlled by the mother planet Xor.' Questioned Dharma while he continued to visualize various celestial

bodies with their coordinates in the inner core, middle core, outer core and far boundary of the Xorian Empire.

'Yes. I have simplified the complex Xorian Empire for you.' Tara responded and, without waiting for Dharma, continued, 'Now, before we move further, you need to understand about our nemesis. The Xorian.' Tara had a sense of purpose in her tone.

Dharma understood that till now, it was just a background. Now was the time when Tara was going to explain about the mighty enemies of Eritrea. The Xorian. He focused his thoughts to sharpen his comprehension.

Dharma, though, is still engulfed in self-doubt. These people really think he could take on such a mighty empire, which spanned many light years, so many planets and solar systems under its suzerainty. He had signed up for a seemingly impossible task.

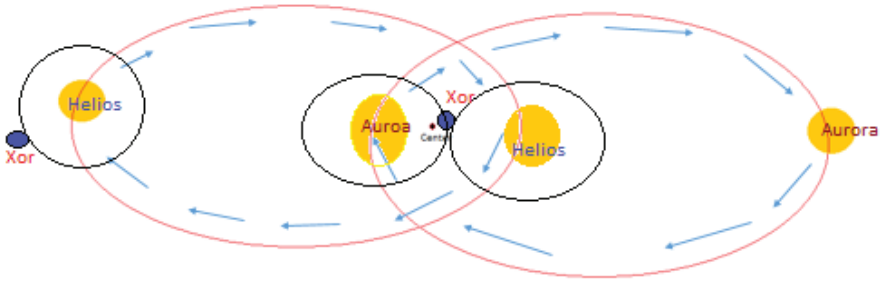
Boro was busy with something. Zoro was standing behind him, staring at the screen in front of Boro. It seemed the duo was watching something carefully.

Lady Tara was busy explaining to Dharma the historical background of their nemesis. Dharma appeared as if he was staring at the tapestry hanging at the coloured tiles arranged in a jagged pattern, but he was, in fact, visualizing the telepathic message flowing from Tara. Tara continued, 'Xor is a unique planet in this ring galaxy Fran which revolves around a binary suns system.'

'There are many planets which revolve around binary suns. What is so unique in Xor?' enquired Dharma.

'True. But its revolution is unique. It is called Lemniscate Curve. Xor revolves around the two binary suns, Helios and Aurora, making a shape of a Lemniscate or horizontal 8 (∞). See, both Helios and Aurora revolve around each other. In the first half of Xorian year, Xor revolves around Helios, and then when Helios and Aurora come near because of the pull of Aurora is pulled towards Aurora and then starts revolving around Aurora. This is unique in our entire galaxy. No planet ever revolves around two stars in such fashion.' telepathized Lady Tara.

Tara sent mental waves, and a vision came in front of Dharma, whereby he could see Xor revolving around the two suns.




Xor revolves around Helios and then gets shifted to Aurora. Likewise, Xor revolves around Aurora and then later gets shifted to Helios.

'That indeed is unique. I have never imaged any planet could be shifted in orbits in such fashion.' Dharma telepathized in a consenting tone.

'That's true. Even when we learnt this, it was quite a surprise for us too.' Tara responded. She continued with her lecture, as she had now donned the avatar of the university lecturer,

'Xor evolved over a billion years from a mass ball of molten lava to modern-day interstellar civilization. As Xor cooled down, the birds, fishes, mammals, and reptiles evolved. Soon two humanoid species, the Namuh and the Mag, took over the planet.'

Tara then showed the vision of a typical Namuh and a typical Mag. Dharma could relate that Namuh were similar to light skin and broader shoulders and could be easily identified as a typical human on Earth, whereas Mag could be equated to the hirsute, tall, muscular-shaped persons.

'You are right in your analogy Dharma.' Tara's thoughts intervened with Dharma; she continued, 'Namuh is the most technologically advanced creatures in the Xorian Empire. You may equate them with the humans of Earth. If they evolved for another few thousand or so Earth years, they

would be near Namuh of Xor. Mag can be easily paralleled to Homo Neanderthals of Earth.'

Dharma concentrated on the vision projected by Tara. He could gather that a typical Namuh was similar to an average human on Earth. Generally six feet five to six feet six in height, fair complexion, globular skull, and wide pupils, and it seemed to Dharma that modern-day Namuh were easily humans of the future.

Whereas Mags were similar to sophisticated ape-men, who have a long, low skull (compared to the more globular skull of Namuh) with a characteristically prominent brow ridge above their eyes, and the central part of the face protruded forward being dominated by a wide nose. They were more muscular due to being more physically active than Namuh.

Tara continued, 'Both these intelligent races evolved in Xor. Namuh are more ambitious, and thus Namuh grew faster and slowly; Magian lagged in technological development in comparison to the Namuhian race. Xor has seen many wars between these two races, but ultimately Namuh outshined Mag and Mag were thrown to a small territory in the southern part of Xor—the Jabra archipelago, which was named Mag-land. Many of the Mag were also kept as slaves in the Namuhian part. These Mags were always a secondary class, and their status is just slightly above the reptiles, birds, fishes or mammals of Xor.' Tara continued.

'But isn't there any crossbreed between Magian and Namuh?' Dharma enquired.

'There is—Magmu, but they are considered even lower than Magian.'

'I envisage that Namuh has grown technologically and outshined the other race, Mag. Now Namuh dominates planet Xor.' Dharma repeated what Tara telepathized.

'Right. Slowly the Xorian Namuh became an interplanetary civilization wherein they terraformed a few other planets and moons in their solar system and established Xorian colonies. They started with a nearby planet which is in the habitable zone, and found that life exists on another planet of their own solar system called Nadus, though the life there is IP-1.'

'IP-1? I didn't get it.'

'For each planet, we have a category based on its technological development. The Intelli-Parameter or the IP scale rates all the celestial bodies based on the intelligent life that the body support. To put it simply, an IP-Scale 0 means the celestial body has no life. IP-Scale 2 means civilization similar to humans of Earth, which are intelligent

but 'Solo' means fixated on a sole planet or celestial body. IP Scale 3 means civilizations with control over many solar systems, such as Xor or Merkel, and IP Scale 4 is a civilization which is beyond such comparison like Thyzer. They have reached such technological advancement that they can transfer their consciousness to any inanimate object. They are immortal in the true sense. They are going to remain here as long as the Muverse remains.'

'Oh, ok. So IP-1 is similar to Earth when we had dinosaurs only; there was life but not an intelligent one.'

'Correct. Coming back to where we were. So the Namuhian race was dominating planet Xor, and slowly the Magians and Magmus were shifted to this planet Nadus, and to demean them, it was termed officially in Xor's record as Nothing Planet. More so, Nadus hosted extremely wild mammoth animals, and thus it was a kind of punishment also for Magians and Magmus so that they die at the hand of these wild creatures.' Tara telepathized.

'Oh, so now the Magian and Magmus are extinct.'

'No. Somehow, they survived and slowly transformed Nadus into a habitable planet. The wild animals are still there, but somehow the Magian and Magmus find a way to survive and thrive on the planet.'

'But how Magian and Magmu survived. I don't think when they were shifted, they were given any support by the Xorians.' Dharma asked.

'That is a different story. I will tell you about Nadus in detail later. Just remember one thing when you move higher on the IP scale as a civilization, you become more selfish and annihilating. The wild animals of Nadus will not cause harm to someone unnecessarily. They don't have that inclination to kill anyone and everyone. They are content in their own simple life. So it won't be that difficult to survive along with them. After all, on planet Earth, humans also grew along with such wild creatures.' Tara paused for a moment.

She allowed Dharma the moment to sink in what they had just discussed. She was aware that Dharma had to digest a huge amount of information in a short time. That, too, was not through any cerebral transfer but by ancient techniques of storytelling. Hence Tara was more patient with Dharma.

Tara continued after some pause, 'Coming back to the Namuh of Xor. Slowly the Xorian Empire spanned the entire solar system, and soon they started becoming an interplanetary civilization.'

'I guess similar to Type 1 civilization in terms of Kardashev scale of Earth.' Dharma intervened.

'Yes.' Tara confirmed and continued her monologue. 'Slowly, they started sending missions to the nearby stellar system and even identified a few exo-planets where they sent their own Namuhians people. Soon the Namuhians made new planets their habitable territories.'

'Just one query off the hook. In Earth, Homo Sapiens all over Earth did grow and evolve differently. There are distinct physical characteristics between Asians, Africans, Europeans etc. Isn't Namuhians of Xor evolved in such a variegated manner?'

'You are right, Dharma. For simplicity's sake, I said Xorian or Namuhians. The Namuhians of Xor were divided primarily into three main clusters, you can say three main countries or continents in Earth terms. The Acrimean, the Nadriman and Ausulvanian. All these were from Namuh race but have grown differently.' Tara telepathized. She gave a mental command to a device, which started telecasting a visual reference of the Acrimeans, Nadrimans and Ausulvanian.

'Though the Acrimean, Nadriman and Ausulvanian Namuhs of Xor have evolved differently, there were many inter-racial marriages resulting in many who have mixed traits of these races. The visuals that you are witnessing now are of the various Xorian cities. It would help you appreciate Xor better.' Tara telepathized while the projection was on for the consumption of Dharma.

Dharma could see the various beautiful cities of Xor, where the populace at large was beaming itself from one place to another. The skyscrapers were huge, and many airborne vehicles. There were ground scampering vehicles too, but it seemed they were used more for fun rather than necessity. There was public transport too, maybe for those who could not afford the costly beaming from one place to another. Complex air vehicles could also be seen taking people from one city to another in Xor.

As regards the races, Dharma could see a typical Acrimean had a square or oval face, was fair-skinned, had a broad forehead, firm jawline, double eyelid and mostly had sharp features. The Nadriman, though, were generally shorter in height than the typical Acrimean and had fair skin, monolid eyes, and broad foreheads. Ausulvanian had a slightly brownish skin colour, were generally taller than even Acrimean, had broad foreheads and muscularly toned bodies and may be one of the better-looking races in general. Dharma though noted that Namuh, in general,

were mostly having beautiful skin tones that seemed to be due to artificial alteration of genes, as people would have preferred good-looking babies in the past period.

Dharma spotted a few Mag and Magmu distinct from all Namuh, and it is clearly visible that they have lagged behind in the evolution race.

'Tara, aren't the Mag and Magmu shifted to Nadus.' Dharma realized that Mag and Magmu were also shown at Xor in the visual.

'Not all. The majority of them were shifted, and some stayed. These are political decisions. And like you have learnt on Earth, there always are people who will protest against the action of the government. Some of the Namuh started raising their voice against the ill-treatment of Mag and Magmu. Even today, there are many who have made organizations to protect the Mag and Magmu. But going into those details will derail our story. I am just going to give you an eclectic view for a complete understanding of the situation at hand.'

'I understand. I can visualize it. Planet Xor had three primarily intelligent races, which were above the animal kind, the Namuh and the Mag, the third being the cross-breed Magmu. Namuh dominates the planet, and the Namuh of Xor is divided based on the region of Xor, the Acrimean, the Nadriman and the Ausulvanian. The Mag and Magmu are second-grade citizenry and have been given an archipelago, Jabra islands, where they lead a primitive life. The Xorian political leadership, which may be a central body having members from all, i.e. Acrimea, Nadriman and Ausulvania decided to throw Mag and Magmu out of the planet of Xor to a distant planet Nadus; it was like an ethnic cleansing against which voices started to flow from within the dominating race Namuh itself.' Dharma summed it up.

'Yes. The most powerful race and empire within Xor are Acrimea. And unlike what you said that there shall be a central governing body, there is none. Acrimea, Nadri Land and Ausulvania are free to choose their policies. But Acrimeans, inter se Namuh, has grown fast and too far in technological advancement that it became the natural leader for Nadri Land and Ausulvania. Acrimeans were the first to send a mission to Maersk, the nearest planet to Xor. They established a colony there of artificially intelligent robots.'

'I understood. So officially, Acrimea, Nadriman and Ausulvania are free to decide about their policies, but whenever it comes to central policy, it is the Acrimean who rule.'

'Right Dharma. Though this was the situation in the past. Now the Xorian Empire spans more than 400 celestial bodies. 409, to be precise. Each celestial body, be it a planet, moon, asteroid, or space city, is free to choose its political leadership. Whether it would be elected leader or monarch or some other form is also decided by the local celestial body. All these 400+ leaders then collectively form a Congress, which then chooses one leader amongst themselves. Right now, the leader is Nokoevid, who is also the Governor of Ivish—the moon of Outer Boy planet of the Xorian Solar System. Nokoevid is the Supreme Commander with all administrative, judicial, financial, military and legislative powers.'

'So Nokoevid is the most powerful person in this Empire. You have grown so much technologically, but you don't have the concept of separation of power. You don't have judiciary to keep a check on executive power.' Dharma firmly responded.

'Dharma, you are thinking too prematurely from the Earth's perspective. See, Nokoevid is all-powerful, but the body which elected him is one which consists of leaders from each of the celestial bodies. Now if Nokoevid is not performing in the interest of the Xorian Empire, they can impeach him, also. Like his father, Ralf was impeached and sentenced to death by the judiciary. No doubt the Supreme Commander is all-powerful, but if she/he becomes tyrant, then the very body which elected her/him can impeach.'

'Then why this rebel. Why do you want me to fight and forge a weapon to kill Nokoevid if lawfully we can get him removed.'

'These are political questions, Dharma. We, the Eritreans, were captured by force by this mighty Xorian Empire. Do you think we can convince enough members to let go of us just like that? What is in it for them? Why the leaders of various planets and moons would not want to exploit the resources of Eritrea, which they are getting for free. Ultimately the plight of Eritrean people is not their plight. It is none of their concern. In fact, exploitation of Eritrean resources will give something to the Xorian treasury and ultimately will benefit some of the Xorian interests. Therefore, we have to fight it out. We have to show to the mighty Empire that sometimes the seeming small thorn can give big wounds.'

'Hmm. You make sense. I always thought that despite we on Earth being so technologically advanced are still so poor in managing the affairs of our planet. Lots of strife and conflict.'

'That is not unique to you. This is everywhere. But we will keep the philosophical discussion for some other time. Let's get back. So, I was saying

that Acrimea was at the forefront of space expeditions. Acrimea of Xor sent missions to planets outside their stellar system and started terraforming various rocky moons of the gaseous planet in their solar system. The Namuhian were spread across the stellar system. Soon space elevators to Nadus were created, which ensured a smooth to and fro of goods and living beings between Xor and Nadus. This technological development was used by the political leader of Xor—read Acrimea—to ship Mag and Magmu to Nadus. The Nadriman and Ausulvanian of Xor were looking at this development with lots of anxiousness as, who knows, the Acrimean may sometime in future shove them also to a distant planet like chattels.'

'This makes sense. So, because of this fear amongst the Nadrimans and Ausulvanians, the protest began against this ethnic cleansing of Mag and Magmu, and that's why a large chunk of Mag and Magmu still remained at Xor.'

'Yes. The Acrimean cluster in Xor at that time was under the great leadership of Floraman Kontana. He was a remarkable leader. He put a lot of focus on space exploration and even created a space army. He took Acrimea to such height that in no time, within the entire solar system, Acrimean presence was felt. From the various asteroids, he got certain exotic stuff that allowed the Acrimean of Xor to create high-speed space expeditions.' Tara telepathized.

'So Xorian also travel through Warp Drives.' Dharma asked quizzically.

'Haha. No. At that time, it was not through Warp Drives. Though now we have developed much higher technologies and have the capabilities to travel at a speed which you cannot even imagine.'

'I have no doubt of that. I have myself witnessed it.' Dharma retorted.

'Haha. You are still angry about the way we brought you here. But believe me, you are meeting your destiny here. You are born for this purpose to liberate us from the evil rule.' Tara continued. 'Coming back to where we were, soon Acrimean were much higher in technological advancement that even the Nadriman and Ausulvanian started feeling that they were second-grade citizens in Xor. Acrimean started exploring the nearby solar system and found many exo-planets that can support life.'

'I can guess now that what was done to Mag and Magmu is now to be done with Nadriman and Ausulvanian. They will be thrown to these exo-planets.' Dharma said.

'You are a keen observer and quick learner. It was true that the plan of Floraman Kontana's administration was to shift Nadriman and

Ausulvanian to such planets. But had they done it so outlandishly, it would have resulted in intra-planetary war in Xor. So Floraman Kontana came up with a brilliant plan for 'Habitat the Muverse'. The Xorian masses were supposed to habitat these newfound exo-planets. They started a scheme that they will pay lifetime money enough to sustain a good life and all comforts for those Xorian families who accept the scheme. This, they said, is open to everyone, whether Acrimean, Nadriman or Ausulvanian. As it promised an exotic life on a foreign planet and huge money to the family that remains behind, many enrolled.' Tara continued with her allocution.

'But when it was implemented, it was done with bias. Kontanian administration may have chosen better worlds for their people and harsher territories for others.' Dharma interjected.

'You are correct. You have guessed it so right without many clues.' Tara appreciated.

'Just a guess.' Dharma telepathized with a tinge of embarrassment.

Tara continued, 'Slowly many realized that on good exo-planets Acrimean were sent and Nadriman and Ausulvanian were sent on not so friendly places. Although the scheme was voluntary and Nadriman and Ausulvanians could refuse to go, the lure and offers were such that many Nadriman and Ausulvanian fell for it. These policies made the leadership of Nadriman and Ausulvanian look for alternates. Ausulvanian were in no mood to confront Acrimean, and they accepted Acrimean as a superior race and were happy to be second fiddle to them. Nadriman now has no choice, and they start exploring the space but soon realize that the capability of Acrimean is far superior.'

'The Nadriman accepted their defeat.'

'Yes. At least at that point in time, it seems so. The Nadriman were allowed to take advantage of the 'Habitat the Muverse' scheme, and many Nadriman were shifted to long distant planets. Soon the Xorian Empire expanded, but mostly it became an Acrimean Empire. Ausulvanian, as they accepted Acrimean supremacy, were given better habitable planets.'

'Understood. Thanks a lot, Tara.' Dharma said in an applauding tone.

'Why, thanks?' Tara was confused.

'You have explained such a complex scenario with such ease. Mostly you are leading me towards the inherent weakness in Xorian Empire while unfolding the story.' Dharma explained.

'I didn't get what you were saying.'

'See, you are not only telling me what transpired but are also leading to the fact that Xorian Empire, though it may be vast and powerful, has its own fragility which, if exploited aptly, could bring it down. Xor is not a committed body but a confederation with many distraught people such as the Nadriman, the Mag, the Magmu and even the second fiddle Ausulvanian.' Dharma telepathized purposefully. He was not only now learning about the story but contemplating ways of finding the chink in the armour. He was strategizing against the enemy already.

'I must appreciate your thinking. You should not thank me but yourself. You are the one drawing such eventful conclusions.' Tara telepathized, extolling the observations of Dharma.

'Thanks. But it is your story telling ability. It is interesting to learn about this empire.' Dharma was curious.

'Yes, it is an interesting story. So once the super-luminal travel was invented, the Acrimean of Xor soon established suzerainty over distant places.'

'But the Acrimean also started with baby steps, and their first Spaceship that breached the Stargaze speed was 'Savitra65'.'

'What is Stargaze speed?' Dharma was perplexed.

'Oh, so sorry. What is the maximum speed at which your spaceship on Earth can travel per the latest technology?'

'Well, I was selected as part of the core crew of the fastest known space voyager back on Earth, though I never got the chance to sit in it because Zoro kidnapped me to this place.'

'Haha. You know how to be sarcastic. But my question was, what is the max speed that can be achieved by this cutting-edge spaceship of yours?'

'The MV Cerestor, which has the quantum space engine based on Ceres-dig, can achieve the max speed of around 1 AU/hour or 150 million KM per hour. That's why it is so special. Covering the distance of 1 AU in one Earth hour is a remarkable feat.' Dharma responded.

'Good. And if I can ask you what technology was used therein for such huge propulsion'. Boro telepathized to both Tara and Dharma. Boro looked as if he was busy, as he was towering over a table with the screen. Though, Dharma realized that he was intently part of this conversation.

Dharma was a bit surprised but continued with what he had learnt, 'We realized that the fuel-based propulsion is an inferior way of thrusting the vessel. Therefore, we created a Ceres Drive using the material Ceres-Dig, which traps the solar radiation and bounces it inside, giving huge propulsion.'

Dharma paused for a moment. Just to understand the reaction of his audience. But there was none. He continued, 'Initially, it was felt that it was against Newton's third law of motion. However, later we discovered that the atoms of Ceres-Dig react with solar radiation and give electric propulsion, unlike the reaction-based fuel we used hitherto. The solar radiation available in the cosmos is the supply which is amplified by this drive. This gives us an ultrafast speed allowing us to cover the distance between Earth and Mars in around two hours' time. This would be the game changer and have made us an inter-planetary civilization. In fact, we are hopeful of becoming an inter-stellar civilization in a century's time.' Dharma was elated while talking about the great civilization of Earth.'

'In ancient history, the Acrimean discovered almost four times faster travel. This speed is called the Stargaze Speed.' Boro telepathized indifferently.

Dharma was taken aback. Sometime back, he thought about how fortunate he was to be part of the crew of the spaceship, which was the fastest known to humans. But now he felt so little and unimportant as the speed, which he thought to be fast, is nothing compared to the technology of these people who believed him to be their lord.

Tara intervened. She telepathized to Dharma, 'Don't flinch. Let me explain. As I told you, Xor revolves around two Suns, one is called Helios, and the other is Aurora. Both are similar to your Sun in the Earth's stellar system. You remember that Xor has a unique revolution, the Lemniscate curve, which means it revolves around Helios and Aurora but one at a time. It revolves around Helios, then comes to the centre and then pulled by the gravitational force of Aurora, completes the revolution and then is again pushed into the orbit of Helios. From this centre point, when the planet is pushed by Helios and entering Aurora's orbit or pushed by Aurora and entering Helios orbit, the distance between Xor and Helios, as well as Xor and Aurora, is about 648 million klicks. The total distance between Helios and Aurora with Xor at its centre, when Xor is getting pulled by the gravitation of one Sun and goes in its orbit, is around 1250 million klicks. In the past, for the Namuhians, this distance of 648 million kilometres was a special number as in their mythology, the supreme God has two bright hands, and when the God spreads their hands, the distance between the two hands is one billion klicks. So, in Xorian myth, it is presumed that God manifests itself twice a year when it spreads its arms, so Xor the centre is where the body of God lies, and the two bright arms

are the two Suns, which are visible to people of Xor every half year. The science met mythology with Stargaze, and thus it was a special number of the astronomers of Xor too.'

'Is Bof followed by the Xorian too?' Dharma asked curiously.

'No. Bof is followed by Eritreans. Though it is a true and sacred religion, unfortunately, the uninitiated cannot understand it. Xorian's theology is different.'

Tara continued. 'Further, there is one more interesting similarity. You have achieved this remarkable speed by using the material Ceres-dig which is available on the dwarf planet Ceres, which you have mined through the help of robots.' Tara continued.

'You know a lot about the situation on Earth.' Dharma was impressed by their knowledge of Tara about the technology of Earth.

'Yup, I studied it a lot, as you were there, my brother. Likewise, the Xorian at that time had discovered in the asteroid belt between Maersk and Nadus[3] the material called 'Mun-nom', which helped in giving enough energy to propel ship Savitra65.'

Dharma could not believe these people who presumed him to be their Lord, their savour, the son of God, had never heard of such ultra-fast travel. Whereas the nemesis had a long, long history of super-fast travel, exotic weaponry and an inter-stellar civilization. Dharma felt as if he was insignificant, and these people had put a mistaken belief in him. He was surrounded by these self-doubts even more as he was learning about the capabilities of his abductors and their world.

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[3] See the Appendices for the Picture of Solar System of Xor. All the planets are explained there.

## CHAPTER 6

# Mother Planet Xor

Dharma squirmed in his chair and telepathized, 'Prior to the discovery of these super-luminal modes of travel, I wonder how Xorian managed an inter-planetary empire with sub-luminal speeds,' Dharma telepathized.

Tara responded, 'Yes. Xorian had to be content with Stargaze speed (60% light speed) only till recently, i.e. around six Tym (600 Earth years) back. They knew Merkel had achieved 100C or a hundred times the light speed. That's why they longed to achieve Tylight speed.'

'But they, at best, could achieve Stargaze speed with Mun-nom.' Dharma intervened.

'Merkels knew how to use the naturally traversable cosmic bridges as well as to create space shuttles with warp drives, which were called Indpro, i.e. Industrium Projectile, cause they used the material Industrium or Antium. But that max speed was hardly around one Tymlight speed which is 100C for highly sophisticated vehicles.'

'Ok. For super-luminal travel, Xorians have to depend upon the Merkels, which I presume would have charged dearly for this monopolistic technology.' Dharma was trying to imbibe what had been delivered to him.

'Yes. You can now appreciate that although the Acrimeans have terraformed a few planets and found a few exo-planets which supported life, the journey to these places was a one-way affair. To give an example, the journey to the planet Parinjay situated in the nearest habitable stellar system, Acra, would take ten Xorian years one way with Stargaze speed, i.e., 60% light speed.'

'Yes. I understood that. But ten years as a one-way journey is too much.' Dharma telepathized.

'Yup. Given the fact that Xorians had found out the cure to most of the known diseases and have tinkered with the genes in such a manner as they don't age, ten years is still a manageable task.' Tara responded.

'But to keep control over a distant planet that takes ten years to reach will be a difficult task.'

'Yes, Dharma. You are correct. For example, planet Parinjay, which boasts great natural resources and great fauna and flora and where the majority of Acrimeans were settled, also wanted to be governed independently. Soon they stopped paying any tax to the mother planet and declared that the resources of Parinjay planet belong to the inhabitants of the planet.' Tara telepathized.

'So, in a short time, Xorian lost control over such planets.' Dharma queried.

'Kind of. Parinjay was an example of where Acrimeans were settled. Likewise, in Acra solar system, other planets Volsotovok and Bobro were inhabited by Nadrimans. They just waiting for an opportunity to secede from this rule.' Tara telepathized.

'I can imagine. When Volsotovok and Bobro knew that it would take such huge time for Xorians to come to their planet, why would they like to be controlled by them? They will develop it as per their own philosophies.' Dharma said. He, at times, was relegated to speech through vocal cords.

'Not only that. Nadrimans of Xor, when learnt that settlers on planets Volsotovok and Bobro were doing good, they also started the journey to these planets. Soon these planets became the hub of anti-Acrimean sentiments. So, when even planet Parinjay mostly Acrimean settlers, started raising concern against mother planet Xor, Volsotovok and Bobro were more vulnerable to rebel.' Tara telepathized.

'This might not have gone well with Xor. What steps Floraman Kontana took? You said he was a great leader and visionary.' Dharma asked.

'Yes, not only the distant planets of Parinjay, Volsotovok or Bobra, which are in the Acra Solar System, but also the terraformed moons, such as Ivish, Sur or Aidni of Outer Boy planet, in the Xorian solar system, too revolted to be governed independently. The civilization which was developing there found no merit in getting associated with Xor. Whereas Xor, which had spent tremendous resources in terraforming them, can only have an advantage when it exploits these planets.'

'The resources on these planets should be freely available to be exploited by Xor; otherwise, what is the advantage for Xor to have spent huge time,

money and effort in populating these distant celestial bodies.' Dharma cut in between.

'Yes. This all led to a civil war.' Tare reacted.

'Were all these planets so advanced that they could take on the mighty Xorians?' Dharma questioned.

'You are right, Dharma. All these planets, which were inhabited by the Xorians, were not having enough resources to fight. But they had the advantage of distance. See, Xorians also had no experience fighting a war in such distant places. Imagine that a planet is hostile to you. It will not allow your spaceships or probes to land. It will fight with you. And these people were originally from Xor. They had knowledge of modern weaponry and warfare. They were not primitive.' Tara responded.

'Understood. Moreover, I missed the timeline. This all might have taken place in few centuries, and therefore in that time, the local civilization also would have grown.'

'Correct. Soon this civil war grew, and with minor victories, the rebellion became stronger. This was named as *War of Glory*. This war had a deep impact on the politics of Xor. Floraman Kontana had a vision, and he was the one who established the great Xorian Empire. The irony is after him, his successors somehow could not handle it that well, and now Xorian Empire is in the hands of pure evil like Nokoevid.' Tara continued.

'But how did Floraman Kontana die?' Dharma asked.

'I never said he died. He left the reins of the empire to his successor after being at the helm of affairs, and then he took voluntary retirement and left for an unknown life.' Tara responded.

'I remember you said that Xorian had learnt how to genetically alter so that they don't age and they have got immunity from all known bacteria and viruses.' Dharma telepathized, though his tone had a touch of perplexity.

'Yes. But immortality also has its own problem. You get tired of the routine. So Floraman Kontana, after establishing a huge and thriving Acrimean empire, has left to do something else. We don't know where he is and what he is doing now. Whether he is alive or dead is unknown.' Tara intervened in between.

'But now more than ten Tym or 1000 Earth years have passed, so I doubt whether he will be alive. But nevertheless, let's focus back on the *War of Glory*.' Dharma replied.

'It grew difficult for the mother Xorian planet to keep control over the distant planets.' Tara continued.

'But you said they somehow, with the help of Mun-nom material, developed high-speed travel.' Dharma asked in an interrogating tone.

'That is true. But sending few spaceships at near-luminal speed and sending an entire military fleet at such speed is difficult.' Tara telepathized.

'I can understand that. It would be difficult to control such an empire.'

'The Acrimean of Xor were a capable race, and their great leader Floraman Kontana was at the peak of his career. His great military strategy and remarkable display of statesmanship ensured that the War ended and Xorian Empire with mother Xor planet as its supreme command was established.' Tara telepathized. 'The seed sown under the great leadership of Floraman Kontana helped the Xorian Empire to grow, and now in almost one Tymex time, it has grown to span approximately seventy square Tymlight,' Tara continued.

'Tymlight square?' Dharma enquired.

'Sorry, I forgot. Tymlight is a unit equivalent to a hundred light years. If we presume the Xorian Empire to be a circle, then the radius of such a circle from mother Xor planet as its centre is approximately 472 light-years, so the area of the Xorian Empire is 683,100 square light years, roughly equal to seventy square Tymlight.' Tare explained.

'That is an interesting way of explaining the span of an inter-planetary Empire.' Dharma responded.

'I know. But to keep it simple, this is easy. Till the last count, it encompasses fifty-six different solar systems, 409 celestial bodies which host twelve different major races belonging IP-2 and IP-3 intelligent life.' Tara continued and showed a vision to Dharma of this huge inter-planetary civilization.

'This is a huge empire.' Dharma said. 'Traveling faster than the speed of light is a fantasy for us and an inter-planetary civilization we believe we may achieve in the near future.' Dharma continued.

'Yes. The humans on Earth have grown substantially, but had they not destroyed their own civilization, Earthlings, they would be at a similar level in terms of technology.' Tara telepathized.

'Destroyed ourselves.' Dharma was curious.

The planet Eritrea was abuzz. Celebrations were going on, and everyone was ready to watch the official ceremony. The Xorian rule today had

completed time equivalent to one hundred Earth years. The hundred years of technology, glory and splendour for administration and hundred years of plight, misery and slavery for the Believers of Bof.

One of the most attractive edifices created by Governor Kor's administration was Cloud City. Kor, an Acrimean Namuh, had a fine taste. The Cloud City building was like a mini city hovering half a kilometre over the Eritrean planet. It revolves around the planet in half Eritrean day.

'Sir, they are spotted in the city of Wen. I have received the coordinates from our spy in the city of Wen at Mazol.' Jarvis spoke as he entered through the automatic door of the round office in the cloud city. The top political leadership of the Xorian Empire made this place it's home whenever they were on their visit to Eritrea.

'Great, Jarvis. Your spy network is superb.' Dias telepathized back. Jarvis was from the planet John, a distant planet at the border of the Xorian Empire. Jarvis was a native who, in Xorian parlance, was called the 'in-bred'. In-bred were those intelligent races which were dominating the celestial body when Xorian landed on that planet or moon. Once Xorian suzerainty was established, these races were taught the Xorian way of life. Xorian believed they had to civilize all these native races who were so far behind on the technological scale. Those in-bred who had shown promise and were not hostile to Xorian were recruited into the elite services of Xor. One such example was Jarvis, who belonged to the race 'Hum'[4].

'Sir, our spy is asking what his orders are.' Jarvis blinked his eyestalks in nervousness. His other two protruded tentacles, whose primary purpose was olfaction, could sense some danger.

'Ask them to tail Boro and his gang completely. Don't let that rebel slip away. Our forces are going to catch hold of him soon.'

'Sir, if you suggest, we can terminate this evil right away.' Jarvis responded.

'No, you stupid. Don't do any misadventures. Don't act unless you are told to. Tail Boro and give me his coordinate.' Dias angrily responded. Jarvis's olfactory system had worked well. Dias was not known to show any mercy—especially to the in-bred.

'Ok, sir. I will keep you posted. There is one innocuous thing, though.' Jarvis' lean body and his cinder block legs were trembling.

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[4] Hum – refer Various Races Annexure.

'What? Remember, if it is not relevant or important, I will punish you for wasting my time' Dias was frustrated.

'Ah, no, Sir. It is not that important. Just this, Boro has got a new guest. Some young person.' Jarvis responded.

'What non-sense. I am not interested in the guests of Boro. He might be brain washing someone else. You ensure that I get his coordinates properly. I have to join the event which the Governor of Eritrea, Lord Kor, has organized, and I can't be late for it.' Dias left the room.

The bald, sandy surfaces were dry and arid, and long patches of the desert would make anyone nauseate. The sun was extremely cruel, and the large wagon in the middle of the large swathe of sand was enduring ruthlessness.

Inside the wagon, a beautiful Angelan lady was sitting beside an Acrimean muscular guy.

'What did that bloody cyborg say? What are our instructions?' Laura, the beautiful lady of the Angelan race, telepathized. She had a frown on her face. She knew that her boyfriend, the spy Jolly was communicating with another spy. They were discussing some instructions that they had received from their top boss. Dias, the cyborg. Chief of Intelligence and Secret Services in Nokoevid's administration.

'I have just heard back from Jarvis. We have to only tail. I have them covered. You remain where you are.' Jolly, a middle-aged male of the Acrimean race, responded and cut the communication. Jolly deliberately telepathized the message for someone at the other end of the communication and to Laura.

'You should not have brought me here. Why must you, tail? Why can't that other person do it? He is equally paid as you are. I have seen you slog only, and you push me into such stupid things which I don't enjoy at all.' Telepathized the girl in an irritating tone, sitting next to Jolly.

'Nothing Laura. I told you not to interfere with my work. I love you a lot. But professional and personal domains are to be kept separately. I need to just tail a target. It is a long and boring job. That's why I insist you come with me. Because I can easily spend quality time with you along with doing my duty.' Jolly responded.

'Spending quality time. In this desert? The city of Wen is far away. What are you doing here? To spend quality time, we should spend it in some happening place.' The girl enquired.

'You ask too many questions. Sweetheart, isn't it enough that we two are chilling here.' Jolly responded.

'Chilling here. In this desert. I know you are tailing someone. I, too, heard the blaring communication, which was in-advertently kept on public mode. You better let me go. I am fed up with you.' The girl got irritated and was about to leave.

'Sorry, sweetheart. Don't be so upset. My duty requires me to be here. But nothing stops me from spending some quality time with you.' Jolly gave a mental command, and the vehicle converted itself into a small building.

'Now tell me, how can I be of service? Let's watch the Cress match. Today is the final between Nadus's two known rivals, Dhartal and Magath.' Spy telepathized.

'Utter nonsense. I am not at all interested in that medieval game. Too much bloodshed and such nonsensical monstrous animals are used.' The girl responded.

'So, what do you want.' Jolly telepathized.

'Better you tell me why we are here. Whom are you tailing? Why can't we be enjoying life instead of idling in this desert?' The girl was curious to know who Jolly was fixated on in this desert. Who is the target?

'Sweetheart, I am tailing an important target. I can't move until the target does. Target is here.' Jolly conceded.

'Who is the target? I can't see anyone in the near vicinity.' Girl responded.

'That's why you are not the spy. I am' spy telepathized wryly. 'But let's not deliberate too much on it; if you don't want to watch Cress, then let's watch some movie or other live events.' Jolly telepathized.

'There is a signal from Eritrea. 007 wants to give some message. He tried you, but you are in invisible mode, so no communication could reach you.' The mini robot in the room telepathized to Jolly.

'Ya. I have locked the communications from all except Dias and a few others.' Jolly responded.

'This is how you want to chill.' The girl was now losing patience. Jolly had prioritised interacting with the small droid assistant of his. Seems Jolly was too engraved in his work.

'Project the message.' Jolly responded, ignoring the girl. Though if he wanted, he could have seen the visuals all on his own. But looking at the fact that his girl was too bored, he thought to involve her too. Just to ensure she had some sense of the urgency of the work on which Jolly was spending his time at present.

The visuals from Eritrea started to flow, and Jolly, his girl and the mini robot could see the vision.

'Hi 809, this is 007. I am in the city of Jaipo of Eritrea, and I have discovered that a big terror attack is planned to eliminate Kor. Today there is a celebration here in Jaipo as Eritrea completes 1 Tym of the Xorian control. The Governor of Eritrea had even invited in-bred Eritreans. Kor wants to showcase his power and might. I have come to know from credible sources that a gang called 'Supporters', who have an affinity towards 'Believers of Bof', are planning to kill Kor in this public meeting. I have already informed Dias, but I will also request you involve your dad. Dias may not be in a position to stop the event, but your Dad can.' Spy 007's looked highly distraught and completed the message in a panic-struck tone.

'But where are the elite guards. Kor has one of the best security covers.' Jolly spontaneously responded to the message, though it could not be passed on to the other side. It was a one-sided communication.

'You have to talk to your dad and stop the celebrations. There can be a mole in the security cover. These terrorists can brainwash anyone.' The droid assistant telepathized to all.

'Laura, are you sure you are leaving?' Jolly, instead of responding to the mini robot, encountered Laura. She was almost prepared to leave.

'No. I am not this stupid to not let my boyfriend work properly. I believe you should do your duty. I will not disturb you. I will not leave; I may just go for a stroll outside to give you enough space to deal with this new problem. But one thing, I am not sure how your dad can stop the celebrations.' Laura telepathized. Generally, she never interfered, but this time, she uncharacteristically spoke regarding the work.

'My dad is the Secretary of Defence in the Kor's administration. He is the most trusted minister that Kor has.' Jolly replied.

'You never told me your dad is such a powerful person.' Laura was astonished.

'Somehow, we never spoke about it.'

'Hurry up, 809; you need to talk to your dad quickly.' The mini droid was panicking as the time was running out.

'Send the message to my dad. Tell him all these things.' Spy 809 commanded the robot.

'But your message will reach your dad after two Ahom[5]. Hope that be sufficient time for your dad?' Laura posited to Jolly.

'There is no choice.'

'I don't understand your spy colleague 007, who is physically present in Eritrea, instead of directly talking to your father, is sending a message to you here. This far where the one-way message to receive, take two Ahom.'

'Because my father doesn't entertain lesser ranks.'

'So now what.'

'Nothing Laura. We will wait for the time. I will send the message to my father. If Kor dies, it would be a big blow to the Xorian presence in Eritrea. Kor is a brilliant administrator.'

'The signals are getting weak. I must see why it is so.' The droid suddenly started fiddling with the equipment.

'What happened?' Laura enquired.

'Nothing, sweetheart. It seems the signals are weak. The target has energized the shield. This is not allowing me to trace them.' Jolly responded, looking at the equipment. He started working on the equipment along with the small droid.

'I need some fresh air. You handle your targets and the problem of Eritrea at hand. I will take a stroll and come back.' Laura telepathized.

'Are you angry, sweetheart? Give me some time. I will rectify this, and we will spend quality time together.'

'I am not angry at all. I just need some fresh air. I will take a stroll and come back. Hopefully, after that, you will only spend time with me. And after that, if there is any distraction, I will just smash all these.' Laura gestured towards the various small pieces of equipment the spy was holding.

'Okay, sweetheart. You are the best.'

Laura left the temporary abode for a quick stroll, and the spy got busy ensuring and fiddling with equipment in pursuit of better signals of his target.

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[5] 2 Ahom is equivalent to approximately 5 Earth hours.

## CHAPTER 7

# Rise of Xor

'What do you mean by destroyed ourselves?' Dharma asked curiously.

'Mutochthons have established an intelligent life even on your Universe and your planet too.' Tara sounded mysterious.

'What is Mutochthons? It seems you people are highly superstitious. You all believed me to be the son of God.' Dharma relayed sarcastically.

'Sometimes, when you reach the zenith of science, you learn how little you know. The faith becomes stronger and stronger when the scientific discovery is at peak.' Tara was serious.

'Hmm. But I am curious to learn about Mutochthons, even if it is a myth or legend' Dharma riposted.

'It is not a myth. Though we cannot prove it directly, by necessary implications, it is proven. I will explain to you.' Tara telepathized. 'See, we at Eritrea were at a similar level of technological advancement as you have seen on planet Earth. We were even successful in establishing contact with alien life, and that's when we met Xor. Our interaction with Xor was both good and bad for us. On the one hand, we ultimately lost our freedom to the mighty Xorian Empire and forcefully became their part and second-grade citizens in our own land, but on the other hand, we learnt that alien life has the same basic structure as ours. Xor was a vast Empire, and when we interacted with them, we learnt that all alien life has a common origin. This was when our faith in our Bof increased because Bof was written in ancient times, and it rightfully said that we all originated from a common power. That is called Mutochthons.' Tara continued.

'Bof states that we all have a common originator.' Dharma telepathized in a mischievous tone.

'Not only that. Bof, in verse fifteen in its chapter on Tungolcraft, states ' alien world will take over 'Land of Light', and at that time the son of

God will need to be sent to 'Blue Land' in kindred Muverse for long but when he returns he shall restore the peace to the 'Land of Light". Tara was literally humming while telepathizing the verse of Bof.

'But I am still confused.' Dharma said instead of telepathizing. Dharma had not yet learnt completely to communicate through telepathy and, at times, was relegated to speaking out his thoughts instead of directly relaying the mental waves.

'I understand. In simple words, our Bof says that at a particular point in time, we, the Eritreans who are referred to as the Land of Light, shall be meeting an alien species which will look similar to us, but at that time we have to let the son of God go to a parallel universe for longest of time, but once he returns, he shall restore our dignity.' Tara telepathized.

'The timelines mentioned in Bof happened to meet with the Xorian advent, so you believe whatever is written in Bof is correct' Dharma was sceptical.

'No, my brother. You are not getting it. This book was written when no one could dream of space travel. At that time, having a concept of aliens taking over our land, we need to send someone to a parallel universe, and that all aliens, us and where we will send our saviour will all have common ancestry, these things cannot be a coincidence. This makes the faith in the Bof stronger.' Tara telepathized.

'I need to read Bof myself; only then can I say anything about it.' Dharma said in a less assured tone.

'You still doubt. But answer me one thing. You were on planet Earth, and now you are in a different world. But you can see for yourself that the basic common factor between us is that we have a common origin. The people on Earth might be different from you or us because of different upbringings. A child reared in a palace is different from the one brought up in the jungle, but the basic original traits remain the same. This fact makes our belief in Bof even stronger, which states that all the intelligent life in this Muverse as well as kindred Muverses, which means parallel universes, is brought to life by Mutochthons.' Tara assured Dharma.

'Ok. Even if I agree that there were Mutochthons who originated the intelligent life in all universes, including your universe or Muverse, why are they doing so? And where are they now.' Dharma telepathized. Realizing that he needed to practice the art of communication with mental waves more to perfect it.

'See Dharma, in your bringing on Earth, you might have purchased or seen people purchasing aquariums at home.

'Yes, I had one with me too.'

'Now, suppose you are a fish in that pond. You don't know from where a new fish has come, but then these fishes bring life to more new fishes. And slowly, the aquarium has a huge population. Likewise, the owner has brought a new aquarium, new fishes and many such aquariums.'

'So as a fish, I would wonder from where I had come, or other fishes have come. These aquariums are like parallel universes, and these fishes, on their own, cannot go from one to another. But the owner can pull one and put it in another.' Dharma started a monologue of his own.

'True.' Tara responded and continued. 'Likewise, we don't know why Mutochthons want to bring intelligent life to this world. But we believe in our Bof, which suggests that Mutochthons have spread intelligent life across various galaxies and universes. We, right now, cannot travel across the galaxy. We have limitations. But the fact that we have met almost seven different alien civilizations, and all have a common ancestry, including that the ones which have taken place in parallel universes suggest that our belief is not un-founded.' Tara telepathized in an assured tone.

'Well, I see what you are suggesting. Let me concede to the fact that there was a far superior race may be in some other dimension which is beyond our imagination which has established a common ancestry which is our God, but I still don't understand how I am the son of God and what about your statement that Earth destroyed its civilization?' Dharma countered.

'No, Bof doesn't say Mutochthons are God. They are a superior race. Like to an ant, a human being may look like God, but that doesn't make a human being God. Mutochthons may be superior beings to us, but they are far shorter than being considered God-like. The Bof says that God, or the ultimately powerful being who is the creator and destructor of all, is someone no one can understand because that power is beyond all of us. But to ensure that there is always a balance, there are many greater beings who are created whose duty is to bring balance. Sometimes they can be destructors who just destroy and punish, and people call them pure evil. But they also have the purpose of creating some kind of balance in society. Likewise, there are saviours, and their purpose is also the same to bring back the balance. These are people with higher power and merit, and their purpose in life is to play a part in maintaining balance. You are one of such

higher beings, whom in adulation the Bof refers to as the son of God.' Tara explained.

'I am trying to understand.'

'See Dharma, if you were not the person with higher merit, you would not have survived as an infant this journey to a completely new world where not even the space-time but the physical world is reversed. As Prof. Boro said, the dark matter or unknown, undiscovered matter in your world is discovered matter in our world and what is all discovered is undiscovered for us. Your journey now makes you the only person in this world who will be in a position to understand and fathom everything in this world, and this makes you literally the most powerful of all here.'

'It is still confusing, but I am trying to understand this complex web of things.' Dharma said in a confusing tone. He was again relegated to communicating through speech.

'The telepathic communication was practised by ancient Earther, that was lost now. I have studied planet Earth a lot more than you. You might have only twenty-four Earth years to study that planet, but here a period of almost one Tym (one hundred Earth years) passed. So, I know about it far more than you, my brother.' Tara telepathized.

'But tell me one thing. You said Earth destroyed itself. What does it mean?' Dharma enquired.

'Because we believe that Xor and Earth were seeded almost at a similar time by the Mutochthons. One set of Mutochthons was seeding Xor with intelligent life and others on this parallel Muverse Earth. Because even on Earth, the earliest seeds of hominids were sown at a place you now know as Eritrea. Isn't it interesting?"

Dharma went into deep thought. He remembered even Zoro said the same thing. Eritrea in Earth and a happenstance.

'You are right.' Tara intervened. 'Bof states that Mutochthon, at a similar time, seeded Earth, Xor and Eritrea. Therefore, the similarities between the Xorian intelligent race to that of humans of Earth and Fleshy and other races in Eritrea. More so, that's why the earliest hominids are found at a place called Eritrea on Earth and not at any other place.'

Tara continued without waiting for any reaction from Dharma. 'We also believe that Earth Xor and Eritrea were seeded by the Mutochthons at around the same time because their destinies were intertwined. And now you see they indeed are.'

Dharma objected, 'But by mere similarities of names by a place at Earth and your planet you are establishing. … '

Tara interjected in between, 'No, my dear brother. Absolutely not. Even the names are similar because I am telepathizing. You are listening to my thoughts but absorbing them based on your understanding. This story you are receiving is in your own reflections to my thoughts.'

Dharma responded, 'I got the drift.'

Tara continued, 'Namuh are similar biologically to humans on Earth, and the Mag to the Neanderthal had they survived this long. Xor revolves around two suns, but still, the amount of sunlight it receives, the kind of fauna and flora it has is striking similar to Earth.'

Dharma nodded in affirmation.

Tara's monologue continued, 'But the humans on Earth are not as technologically advanced as Xorian. They are even behind the Eritreans in the technological space. This means only one thing they hit an impediment in their growth. In my study, Earth did not suffer from any major catastrophe in the past period when we estimate that Mutochthons might have seeded with intelligent life on Earth.'

'But the human history of Earth is hardly 5000 to 6000 years old. Humans have achieved a lot in this short period.' Dharma countered.

Tara had a small grin. She telepathized, 'In my estimation and as per my research, it is about a million Earth years before when Mutochthons seeded Earth, Xor and Eritrea. Xorian reached such a zenith, Eritreans too, not that far away, but humans are just toddlers. It means one thing. They destroyed themselves and had to restart.' Tara concluded.

Dharma went into deep thoughts, such deep that even Tara could not read his mind. Either Dharma was getting wiser at the art of cerebral communication so as to cloud his thoughts, or he was in shock. Not thinking, just pondering over what Tara revealed.

'This is not unique to Earth, my brother.' Tara continued in a more sympathetic tone. 'See, in our universe, in our galaxy, we only have seven intelligent civilizations, namely, Thyzer, Merkel, Xor, Eritrea, Mazol, Ether and some unknown in the Mysterious space. Though there are many races as part of these seven civilizations. Whereas, as per our calculation and belief, Mutochthons have seeded at least a hundred million planets with similar intelligent life. So why only so few have reached intelligent life? Reasons are evident; others have destroyed themselves or might not have crossed the 'Ambition Threshold.'

'Ambition Threshold.' Dharma was confused.

'Yes. It is always human ambition which is making it reach the stars. This is the special seed which Mutochthons have seeded. They want to see how we evolve in different environments and how highly ambitious we are.' Tara telepathized. 'Nevertheless, let us continue with our story. Because I have to educate you too much and then I have to teach you the art of communication. You have to learn about our culture and civilization too. Soon you will be visiting Eritrea, where the Eritrean people, irrespective of which country or province they belong to, are now eagerly waiting for you.' Tara continued.

'Eritrean people are waiting for me.' Dharma murmured nervously.

'Not only are they waiting, but we believe that you only can bring them all together. Right now, they are divided, and the Xorian rule every day is making them weak. They not only have lost their self-respect but doubting their abilities. The majority of them had lost the steam to even fight the evil Xorian rule. They have accepted the status quo. You are the one who will give them the strength and power to regain their lost momentum. To pull them out of the morass.' Tara telepathized.

'Let's understand a bit of history before we continue further.' Tara continued with her story.

'But even before that, you eat these tablets. This will give you the required vitality.'

'Tablets. Zoro told me on this planet, we can get properly cooked food.' Dharma was confused.

'I know. But due to paucity of time, we couldn't cook. Thus, you may have to be content as now with these tablets. Later I will switch on 'vigour evanescent,' inhaling which we both would get the requisite energy. Our bodies have implanted chips which tell us how much energy requirement is there. For you, I will check it through the Vitality checker.' Tara gave a mental command, and a small cube-like device shot a few rays at Dharma.

'Your reading is five on a scale of seven, which means you are still sufficiently vital. Which is strange because you haven't eaten anything for so long. No doubt your journey through parallel universes has made you strong both mentally and physically.' Tara telepathized.

'I don't know whether it is a compliment or not, but thanks anyways. I am okay without pills for now. If I feel hungry, I will let you know.' Dharma responded.

'Okay. So I was telling you about the historical developments.' Tara popped the pills, and the cube threw a light towards her, and now her reading showed 5.5 on a scale of seven.

'Xorian planet is a unique planet, as I told you earlier. It is strikingly similar in fauna and flora and other particulars to Earth. Xor revolves around two suns in a Lemniscate curve. But the people at Xor can only see one Sun at a time except when the planet is at the centre the views of two suns together is picturesque.' Tara continued. 'Around 2 Tymex before …'

'Tymex is around 2500 Earth years. Right?' Dharma intervened in between.

'Yes, approximately 5000 Earth years before, Xor, an intelligent civilization, was taking baby steps in space exploration. At that time, the most powerful Namuh race on Xor, the Acrimean race, was taking the lead in space exploration, and they spent huge amounts of money on the colonization of the nearest planet Maersk. But this was a dead planet, and they had to terraform it. Acrimean of Xor started to send various terraforming missions and worked even on Artificially Intelligent Species which can multiply themselves and can terraform these planets. At that time, when Acrimea was taking steps of terraforming and colonizing other planets, a dispute occurred between them and Nadriman on certain local issues. Nadriman, who otherwise also wants to prove their superiority, had declared war on Acrimea.'

'Was the Mag and Magmu shifted out of Xor by this time?' Dharma asked.

'No, during this time, the Mag and Magmu were not thrown out to Nadus. However, because of the failure at Maersk, the focus of Acrimean's shifted to Nadus, the next nearest planet.'

'Failure at Maersk.'

'Yes, Acrimean spent a lot of money in terraforming Maersk, but the money and effort they spent there did not give them any return. Whereas planet such as Nadus was a low-hanging fruit in space colonization. The Acrimeans did not have to terraform the planet; it was in a position to host some form of life. It had an atmosphere. So, the first target was shifting Mag and Magmus to Nadus.'

'So primarily Acrimeans were fighting two battles. One, they were fighting with Nadrimans, and second, they were spending money shifting Mag and Magmu to Nadus.' Dharma said.

'See, Nadriman declared war on Acrimea. So Acrimean were forced to fight. Whereas sending Mag and Magmu to Nadus was because of two reasons. One is to get rid of this inferior race from Xor, a kind of ethnic cleansing, and second, the most important reason is to experiment with how a Xorian life survives on alien land. This will help in future space exploration.' Tara explained.

'That is interesting.' Dharma said.

'Not only that, soon Acrimean defeated Nadrimans and the prisoner of war, and other Nadrimans who were accused of being directly responsible for the war were punished with life sentences at Nadus. They were forcibly shifted to Nadus.'

'So now the Acrimeans wanted to experiment how even the Namuhian race manages at an alien land.' Dharma asked.

'One is that. Second, Acrimean found that the planet Nadus has no great mines or minerals and nothing to offer. This planet did not have anything of substance. So, it can be used to experiment on Mag, Magmus, and now on Namuhs - Nadriman prisoners - to see what kind of physical and psychological impact it has on them. Because of this reason, Nadus was initially also called 'Black Alien Prison". Tara kept up with her story.

'The relevance of this Nothing Planet for our strategic importance will come later. Though this war ensured that Acrimea was now accepted as the leader of the Xorian cause. Slowly Acrimea, due to this space endeavours, established colonies in its entire solar system. Acrimea started shifting the population of other countries and races, especially the Mag and Magmas, to this distant land in the name of terraforming. They also started the 'habitat the Muverse' scheme, and many Nadriman and Ausulvanians, along with Acrimeans, were shifted to distant planets and celestial bodies. Ultimately Acrimean's ensured that planet Xor primarily remained for them and all other surrounding planets and bodies were filled with other races and people.' Tara continued. 'But …'

'But every cloud has a silver lining.' Dharma interjected.

'Very true. When you read mental waves, unlike in vocal cords communication, you can pick up the sarcasm, the enthusiasm and other such emotions easily.' Tara telepathized, giving a cunning smile.

'The Xorian Empire basically is Acrimean Empire.' Dharma was curious.

'Yes, you can say so. And I am learning you are keenly examining the loopholes of our mighty enemy.' Tara was impressed with the strategic

outlines that Dharma thought of while learning about the historical developments.

'No. It seems obvious. The credit goes to you. You yourself are seeding these points. Like Nadus citizenry or residents are anti-Acrimea or that all the territory of Xorian empire may itself has seeds of rebellion.' Dharma telepathized. He was cautious now and ensured he used telepathy for communication. This allowed Dharma to ensure and hone his skill of telepathizing to only Tara instead of everyone present there, such as Boro and Zoro.

'Very true. These are minor points, and these details will help us in taking over the mighty Xorian.' Tara telepathized.

'But why are you not telling me about Eritrea first. Aren't we going to Eritrea?' Dharma was curious.

'Because, my brother, the first lesson in any tactical warfare is to know your enemy as the back of your hand. If you are slightly less aware of our strength, that will work, but if you miss out on any point about your enemy, that may cause us a huge loss later.'

'Agreed fully. It seems I have got a great teacher.'

'Flattery helps, in the words of Professor Boro.' Tara was smiling and blushing simultaneously.

'However, coming back to the story,' Tara continued, 'within a time frame of 1000 to 1500 years, the planet of Xor was in complete control of Acrimea, other races were majorly shifted to newly terraformed planets, and they were in complete suzerainty of Xor, or rather we can say Acrimea.'

'But what was that silver lining' Dharma looked a bit impatient.

'Yes, I am coming to that. See, the element Quanion was discovered by Melange sometime back, and before that, Xorian did not know how to travel faster than light.' Tara continued.

'I have to say, you are turning into Prof. Boro.' Dharma said.

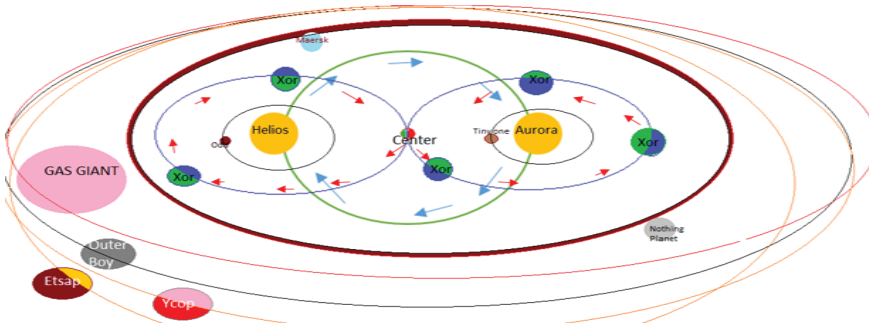
'Haha. Sorry, my brother. I will explain. Recently a mixed race of Xorian and Merkels on planet Xor discovered Quanion.'

'I understand, Quanion. But mixed race of Xor and Merkel.'

'As regards Melange, they are a mixed race between Merkel and Xorian. Merkel is a superior race from a different planetary civilization. But before coming to Merkel's, let's finish that part of the story which belongs to the silver lining.' Tara explained.

'Okay. I will hold my horses.' Dharma telepathized. He had to be patient.

'So around one Tymex, i.e. 2500 Xorian or Earth years ago from today, Acrimea of Xor established itself as the most superior race of Xor; they terraformed many planets and other celestial bodies and shifted the majority of non-Acrimeans to these new planets and bodies. See, by that time, the intelligent life in the Xorian stellar system was established in Xor, Maersk, Nadus/Nothing planet, and various moons such as Mae, Skon, Khart etc. Let me show you the Xorian stellar system.' Tara took a slight pause, and the vision of the Xorian stellar system was seen by Dharma.




'Xor, Maersk and Nadus or Nothing Planet, as Xorian put it, are all in the habitable zone. Xorian focused on Maersk as it is nearest. The average distance is 2668 Fori (one hundred million km Earth standard). But this mission to Maersk was a failed mission as Maersk, despite its numerous attempts, could not be terraformed for suitable IP-2 life. Though with the help of advanced technologies later, Maersk was successfully colonized. But in the beginning, it was a failed attempt, and that made Xorian focus on Nadus, which was at the end of the asteroid zone. Going to Nadus at that time was difficult because the asteroid thicket posed lots of problems. The calculation has to be perfect to clear this part.'

'Now the Mag and Magmus were the new citizens of Nadus.' Dharma shared his thought.

'True. Though the Xorian presence at Nadus did not bode well for the inbred of Nadus.'

'You mean the animal kind of planet, Nadus.' Dharma telepathized. Though he himself was not sure whether Tara meant to refer to the animal kind or some intelligent in-bred race of Nadus.

'There was some reasonably intelligent brutish simian, but post the advent of Xorian, almost all were killed.' Tara clarified.

'Oh.' Dharma felt bad that how colonizers bore bad omen for the natives. He queried, 'Was by this time Mun-nom discovered?'

'No, the research on Maersk, moon Shai of Xor, and various asteroids was going on simultaneously, and later Mun-nom was discovered from one of the asteroids.'

'Ok. Understood.'

'The discovery of Mun-nom and Stargaze hastened the process of terraforming and establishing Xorian suzerainty across the solar system. Soon the moons of Gas Giant and Outer Boy were terraformed. These different environments further helped in various discoveries.'

'I understood about the silver lining now.' Dharma smirked.

'Ok. Let me know what your guess is.'

'See, the Xorian or rather the Acrimeans were terraforming various moons and planets across the planetary system. Even with Savitra65 and Stargaze speed, the distance between these planets and the moon can be covered by the crew in a short time, but controlling such a distant civilization from Xor is difficult. Then as you said, Nadus was populated with Mag and Magmu, the distant moons, which may have terraformed with the majority of Nadrimans or Ausulvanians may be hostile territories. These territories, moons, planets et al. had a chance to get out of the Acrimean control and start a new life. They can govern these new places on their own terms. Acrimean cannot control it from Xor.'

'You are perfect. You are one the sharpest person I have ever met.' Tara couldn't praise Dharma enough. He was extraordinarily brilliant.

Tara continued. 'You are absolutely correct. Controlling territories, especially on far-off moons such as Ivish of Outer Boy planet, from Xor, was not that easy. Savitra65 or Stargaze speed can send a few astronauts or limited people but not a full military. More so, for fuller control, you need quicker communication. Even on a single planet controlling far-fetched land is not easy, so in space, it is even more difficult. The allegiance shifted quickly, and many planets and moons declared independence from Xorian rule. This led to an unprecedented bloodthirsty war referred to as the first Solar War.'

'Interesting. An interplanetary war for secession. This was always on the cards.' Dharma responded.

'Xorian ultimately managed to curb the rebellion but with great difficulty, which gave rise to the United Xorian Committee. The sovereignty of Xor was recognized, but a strict federal structure was put in place. The celestial

bodies such as Maersk, Nadus, Mae, Skon, Ivish etc., were given lots of rights, and except for critical items like sophisticated mass destruction weapons, space force etc., they were free on all counts. A balance was made that the local planetary govt. can rule its own land subject to an overall weak bond with the mother planet Xor.' Tara took a pause.

'This means Xorian Empire was now on fragile ground after the Solar War and War of Glory.' Dharma said.

'This was one Tymex back. Slowly Xorian mastered the Stargaze travel, and now huge mass could be shipped to distant planets at that ultra-fast speed. This Stargaze speed allowed Xorian to become truly an interstellar Empire. Acra, Zen etc., were the nearest stellar systems where the habitable planets were discovered and populated. This was when Xorian developed many prosthetics and implants just as natural as the original limb. This made the Namuhian almost immortal. Many Artificially Intelligent droids were invented, which helped in expanding civilization to faraway places. This was when Xorian, or rather the Acrimean supremacy, was at its peak.'

'It was the time when they encountered the mighty Merkels.'

'Xorian's encountered another interstellar civilization.' Dharma questioned.

'Yes, and it was a game-changer.' Tara telepathized. The cunningness in the tone could be felt by Dharma.

Dharma wondered if his nemesis Xor had a rich history of technological superiority. It had met and dealt with complex space-faring aliens. Boro and the team really feel that he, the poor Earthling, can take them on. Dharma did not know what to say. He glanced at Boro, Zoro and Tara, who all were waiting patiently for this story to get over.

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## CHAPTER 8

# Encounter with Merkel

'So Xorian finally realized that in galaxy Fran, there is an equally or maybe technologically advance alien race that exists.' Dharma telepathized.

'Yes. Merkels were from a distant place, but somehow once the radio exchange happened and Merkels also came to know about the alien race, they visited Xor. Surprisingly they covered the huge distance in an astonishingly less time. Merkel landed on the planet of Xor. Merkel was golden coloured species. They were taller than Namuhian. Merkels had three genders, male, female and bipolar. Bi-polar is unique as they can either become male or female as per their wish. However, when the bi-polar is carrying a baby, at that time, it has to remain in female form. Merkels brought lavish gifts for Xor so as to give signals that they are a friendly race.' Tara paused.

Dharma received the visions of Merkel spaceships arriving at planet Xor and the Golden coloured species exchanging gifts with their opulent hosts.

Tara continued, 'Xorian developed a friendly term with Merkels. Merkels soon started visiting the Xorian planets and moons on a regular basis to explore how the two civilizations could prosper together. Merkels were almost thirteen Tymlight, i.e. 1300 Light Years away from Xor, and still, they could cover this distance in a miraculously shorter time. This impressed Xorians.'

Dharma intervened, 'So Merkels at that time knew the art of superluminal travel. Which was still a distant dream for Xorians.'

'Yes.' Tara responded, 'Xorian believed they could learn this trick from the Merkels. Merkels slowly established a separate colony on the mother planet of Xor. The Xorian government, under the leadership of Floraman Kontana, showed great hospitality to Merkels and allowed them to create

an outpost in Xor. Xorian were keen to learn the secret of superfast space travel because it would not only make them explore space but also help them keep the empire intact. The Solar War and the War of Glory had shown the importance of super-luminal travel.'

'Clearly, the Xorians had an interest in Merkels. But why Merkels were not hostile towards Xorian.'

'See, Merkels wanted to have a friendly relationship because Merkels are known for their trade and business. They have already travelled so much in the Muverse that they are not interested in bloodshed without purpose. They already had a trading post and were trading and learning from the Xorian. So why will they unnecessarily fight and spoil this.'

'Understood. So, both the races have something or other to learn from others.'

'Yes. Soon Merkels and Xorians also established marital relationships, and slowly a new breed called Melange came into being. Melange was an extremely strong and capable race both mentally and physically.'

'And soon they stole the limelight from the Acrimean Namuhs.' Dharma intervened.

'True. Melange, in less than ten Tym—1000 Earth years—of their existence, was the most successful race. They were hardly one per cent of the Xorian population but were at the top positions of every field, whether business, technology, civil services, medicine, law etc.' Tara responded.

'This might have led to another war.' Dharma guessed.

'Not exactly. The Acrimean leaders and political office bearers called for a movement. It was named '*Pure* Xor or Acrimean supremacy. By law, the Xorian administration proscribed Melange from being admitted to government services. For pursuing a profession or any business, Melange had to get a neo-license from the Xorian administration, while Namuhs were not required to get this additional permit.' Tara replied.

'Primarily, the Acrimeans were keeping Melange away from the top spots. Despite Melange being the son of soil just like any other Namuhs.' Dharma responded.

'Yes. Melange, when they objected peacefully, were brutally killed. The goons and hooligans looted and raped the Melange property and women.' Tara telepathized in a placid tone.

'That is preposterous.' Dharma exclaimed.

'Yes, Dharma. Soon it all turned into a bloody and messy affair. Many Merkels and Melange on planet Xor were killed and tormented,

and the local marshals turned a blind eye to their plight.' Tara explained in a serious tone.

'It seems that Xorian Empire does not only have internal instability, but it also has a threat of an alien race now. The Merkels.' Dharma telepathized to Tara alone. He was getting better at the art of cerebral communication.

'Yes. Merkels were powerful, and their technology was superior. Soon the far-resident Merkels came to know about the local misadventure, and in no time, mother planet Xor was surrounded by Merkel's army ships. The blockade was such that Xor got cut out completely, and then the Merkel army launched a brutal attack on the Xorian installations. Xor received heavy casualty.' Tara telepathized, and it could be felt that she had a sense of pleasure describing the misery of Xorian.

'So, this war destroyed Xorian Empire.' Dharma concluded.

'No. The Xorian administration soon realized its mistake and made amends. Instead of fighting, they surrendered.'

'This might have dented the Xorian or, may I say, Acrimean pride.' Dharma telepathized.

'It indeed. And what pinched the most was that they had to give in almost 50% of Acrimean land in favour of Merkel.' Tara responded with a grin indicating the satisfaction she was drawing simply by reciting an incident that happened in the past.

'50% of Xorian planet.' Dharma was surprised.

'No. 50% of Acrimean land. Around 20% of Xorian total land mass. I told you that Xor was divided into three mainland parcels. Acrimea being the largest and most powerful.' Tara corrected Dharma.

'Yes, I do. So, Merkel's only punished the Acrimeans. Not the Nadriman or Ausulvanians.' Dharam responded.

'Yes. Because it was Acrimeans, who was at fault.'

'Understood.' Dharma telepathized and nodded.

'This area was given to Melange and Merkel residents who shall run it as per their own rules.'

'So literally, the Acrimean Empire, which was boasting of an interplanetary or rather an inter-stellar Empire, lost its own land and pride. Acrimean pride' Dharma astonished.

'Indeed. But Xorians, or rather Acrimeans, are a shrewd race. They knew that Merkels were powerful and also primarily a trading class. They mend ways. Soon Shai, the moon of mother planet Xor was terraformed,

developed and made a state-of-the-art trading centre in the Xorian interstellar Empire.' Tara continued.

Dharma was receiving the vision and the messages from Tara. He was concentrating on grasping the minutiae details.

'Xorian administration then requested the Melange and Merkel to make moon Shai their base and return the land mass to Acrimea. They obliged.'

'Maybe a full-fledged astronomical body would always make more sense than a piece of land amidst strangers.' Dharma intervened in between.

'Yes. The Merkels and Melange, which habitat Shai was then called Mishian. It gave birth to a new civilization of Misha, which sits at the centre of Xorian civilization. Misha grew well in trade and commerce, and soon it was a flourishing centre. Merkels would prefer trading with Misha and other planets in the Xorian Empire but not with the mother planet Xor. This was slowly simmering anger in the Xorian heart, but they don't want to commit the mistake of the past.' Tara continued.

'I can understand. Losing war and allowing a foreign civilization to be in one's backyard and seeing them thriving is a big dent in their ego. More so, this would send signals to members of the confederation that they could secede from Xor Federation.' Dharma said.

'Rightly said my brother. Xorian has controlled their federation with the glue of fear. But now, with this loss, Xorian knew that the other territories could secede from them and who knows, Mishian and Merkels may help them.' Tara supported Dharma's thought.

'So, what did Xorian or rather Acrimeans of Xor do.' Dharma asked.

'It is at this time of crisis two things came to the rescue of Xor. First, the interaction with Merkel made the Xorian aware that there is a way of travelling faster than light. Secondly, they understood that the only way of keeping their federation intact was not merely fear but to ensure that local issues were given preference. The concept of a democratically elected Governing Council emerged. The chairpersons of elected representatives of all these celestial bodies were invited to Xor to form the Federal government. This created the glue that was missing earlier. Because loyalty towards Xor was always there as it was the planet from where the Xorian civilization originated. Soon Xorian started accepting Melange, and the relationship with Misha also started improving.'

Tara continued. 'And all this was because of one person named Agami who became a fatherly figure and most respected in Xor. He united the Xorians through this governance reform.

'That's interesting.' Dharma exclaimed.

'Yes. Then sometime in the recent past, one company in Misha discovered Quanion. However, before this could be a known technology in general, Nokoevid, the Xorian leader, ensured that Quanion and Lequaff technology remained under his control only.' Tara telepathized.

'But how could that be possible when Mishian discovered the technology.' Dharma was confused.

'Because Nokoevid allegedly abducted and killed everyone. He was Governor of Ivish - the moon of Outer Boy planet - and had sophisticated killers. The scientists were killed, and Nokoevid himself became the expert in this technology.' Tara responded with a tinge of sorrow in her tone.

'Oh. So it means that Nokoevid alone knew about the Anion ships.' Dharma replied.

'Yes. And till now, it is a company owned by Nokoevid, which has the monopoly of creating the Quanion super space way and Anion ships.' Tara sadly telepathized.

'Nokoevid was so powerful since such a young age, even before he was the Supreme Commander of Xor.' Dharma messaged telepathically in a baffled tone.

'Yes, my brother. Nokoevid was not as young as you are contemplating him to be. His age at present from Earth standard is more than 500 years. Xorians have discovered all those genes which cause ageing and also have reversed them. Thus, Xorians are literally immortal and cannot die due to any known viruses or bacteria or disease. They don't age. Xorian survives for many years. They die either due to accident or due to war or suicide.'

'Suicide. Is it a major cause?' Dharma was confused.

'Yes, my brother. As civilization becomes complex, people tend to behave differently. Because of immortality also comes the bane of facing failures forever. It is a brutal truth that with the most sophisticated technological advancement, the namuh or humans or other humanoid type intelligent life lose the basic element without which they cannot enjoy these sophistications, which is 'humanity' itself.' Tara telepathized in a sad tone.

'Nevertheless, coming back to where we were. Here the Mishian and Melange were striving to develop the technology that could enable

faster-than-light travel, and on the other hand, the now Supreme Commander Ralf—father of the evil Nokoevid - was making plans to get even with Merkels. Many things happened simultaneously.' Tara continued.

'But when Merkels already knew the faster-than-light travel, why they did not tell about the same to Xorian or the Mishian.' Dharma Enquired.

'You have rightly pointed out. Now you tell me what you think can be the answer.' Tara was impressed with the involvement of Dharma in all finer points.

'I can only think of one reason. Why will Merkel easily give away their trade secret? This faster-than-light travel was making them superior. If Mishian were told about this, there is a possibility that the entire Xorian race may come to know about the same. So the superiority or the edge will fade away.' Dharma responded.

'You are absolutely correct. But there is one more reason. Merkel didn't have any great technology for faster-than-light travel. Later we all have come to know that it is by chance they have discovered a few naturally traversable cosmic bridges which allow them to cover distances faster. So they can only travel to those places where these naturally traversable bridges connect. This was coincidently near the Xorian system. Second, they had discovered the antimatter 'Industrium', which allowed them to generate enough energy to create a hyper-drive propellant space shuttle, which allowed them a max speed of one hundred times faster than light, a similar concept on which even the Earthlings are working.'

'So this hyper-drive also worked on the same principle of contracting the space-time in front and expanding it behind the shuttle.'

'Yes, similar to that.'

'Understood. I got the drift.'

'So, when Mishian discovered Quanion, the mistake they committed was in order to keep the entire commercial profit; they didn't disclose the technology to anyone. Not even to Merkel. This is what Nokoevid exploited. He not only killed the ones who knew about this new technology but himself mastered it.'

'Interesting. So now Xorian has a chance to develop Quanion super space ways and travel faster than even the Merkels. They can outshine them. Had Nokoevid not controlled it by force, the Mishians would not only have given this technology to Xorian but also to Merkels. Mishian's work for money and nothing else, I guess.' Dharma concluded.

'But these to be discussed later. We go back to the time when Xorian still did not know how to travel faster than light, Merkels were dominating them, and the trade between Mishian and Merkel was flourishing. However, at this point in time, Merkel's and Xorian met another mighty civilization, the Thyzers. They have the capability of transferring their consciousness to an inanimate object. Thyzer is the most ancient civilization, and most of them just freely float over the length and breadth of the galaxy.'

'So Xor, Merkel and Thyzer, the three most powerful and intelligent races of Fran galaxy, had met each other just a few years back.' Dharma asked with a tinge of amazement.

'Yes. Thyzer is an interesting alien race. They have evolved differently. They don't like to colonize or terraform planets. They have developed capabilities that they can enjoy the planets, moons, asteroids or comets as they are. Thyzerians transfer their consciousness into anything, whether it be disc, robots or any other artificially created object. This is how they traverse the galaxy.'

'Do Thyzerian, too, travel faster than light.'

'Yes, they can. But they don't use any of the eleven Xorian ways we discussed. Thyzerians just freely float across. They are like the celestial body itself, just one which has consciousness.'

'So, we can say that Thyzerians are not a politically collected race like humans on Earth, but every Thyzerian is individually evolved. They are individualistic.'

'You are right, Dharma. Few Thyzerians, though, want to enjoy political unity too. So many Thyzers live on various planets of the Xorian Empire and Merkel's realm. They are though considered the first amongst equals by Xorian and Merkalite.'

'Interesting. And these individual Thyzers would demand a premium wherever they are in the political system. That's why they would stay in the suzerainty of Xorian or Merkal rule.' Dharma riposted.

'Yes, Dharma.' Tara responded. 'Thyzers were the ones who taught Merkel and Xorians about '*Arepo*' waves. The Lauy speed waves.' Tara continued.

'Ya. Almost one and half million times light speed.' Dharma interrupted.

'1.56 million times faster than light speed, to be precise.' Tara telepathized.

'The Thyzerians use *Arepo* waves for communication with each other, and they are scattered across many places in the galaxy.' Dharma merely repeated what he had learnt.

'They spend time at neutron stars, even can go till the event horizon of the black hole and can study about the Muverse in such fashion which no one else can. They can use the knowledge gathered by each other. Thyzerian, at times, transform their consciousness to humanoid form when they would like to enjoy the pleasures of any planet's fauna and flora. Thus, there is so much to learn from their knowledge.' Tara continued.

'Thyzerian, thus, are the most learned specie of the galaxy, if not the universe.' Dharma extolled.

'Yes. Though they are not that relevant for us now except to note the fact that there are few Thyzerian across Xorian or Merkelite Empires, and you may encounter few on Eritrea or Mazol or find them free-floating across space. One more thing that is important to note is that due to the interaction between Thyzer and Xorian as well as Merkelites, now even they know how to use the *Arepo* waves for communication.' Tara was in a mood to hurriedly finish the topic of Thyzerian.

'Understood. But is there anything else regarding Thyzerian that I should know?' Dharma questioned.

'What have you started reading, my subconscious mind?' Tara responded with a question back.

'No. You brought up their topic and finished it suddenly, so I thought there was something more about them. It is just a guess.' Dharma coldly telepathized.

'You are smart, Dharma.' Tara extolled. Her monologue continued, 'One more thing to be kept in mind is that Thyzer, Merkel, Xor, the three most advanced civilizations made a common association so that the misunderstanding led to the Merkel-Xor war can be avoided and thus they created the body called Tymex. This is a floating space city, which is the governing centre. All will contribute financially and other secretarial assistance to this city of Tymex. Tymex will govern intra-galactic issues which concern more than one civilization of Thyzer, Merkel or Xor. Anyone can go to Tymex with their cause, and Tymex will decide accordingly. They have their own constitution and rules. Tymex has standardized the measures of distance, measure of time; it issues the currency which can be used across the galaxy of Fran. Therefore, it plays the role of a central banker in a country. Thus, this is an important institution for the intra-galactic

civilization which consists of three major players, i.e. Thyzer, Merkel and Xor. Control over Tymex means control over the galaxy.'

'I understand it is a body to ensure smooth intra-galactic operations by the three most advanced civilizations. But I have a feeling there is something more to Tymex that you want to bring in.' Dharma interposed.

'You are right, my brother.' Tara applauded. She understood how keenly Dharma was involved in the story. He, indeed, was determined to help the cause. She continued, 'Right now, it is Thyzer who is controlling Tymex. More so, Merkels accept Thyzer as the rightful leader among the three. Xorians have no option but to accede to this fact. Just as an aside, Xorian took the matter of their moon Shai to Tymex. They wanted it back and wanted Mishian to be within the Xorian federation as other bodies are, but Tymex decided that Shai rightfully belonged to Melange and it has a right of independent existence. Xor has no right over it. This public humiliation also made Xorian long for the control of Tymex.' Tara continued.

'So, this is the reason you introduced the mighty Thyzer to the story. Xorians now not only want to defeat Merkels but also those who are indestructible.' Dharma summed up.

'Yes. True.'

'But you said Thyzerians are individualistic. Then the Thyzerians who decided to supervise the body of Tymex were individuals. How were they able to contribute financially or provide secretarial assistance.'

'You are getting into too much depth, Dharma. But will answer this query. Thyzerian are unique; they are pure energy which has consciousness. They can enter into any object and provide life to it. So even an individual Thyzerian is mighty. Those few Thyzerians who decided to stay and supervise the body of Tymex are individuals with gargantuan stature. They are literally the encyclopedia of knowledge of the Muverse. Don't you think they can exchange this immense knowledge and skill for money from any Xorian, Merkelite Company or individuals? They can make money like anything if they so wish. So don't underestimate their capabilities. They are almost God-like.'

'Sorry, I got the drift. I am thinking too much from Earth's perspective. I have to widen my horizon to imbibe this complex civilization.' Dharma apologized.

'Since the establishment of Tymex in this entire inter-stellar civilization, we all follow a uniform date whether it is Thyzer, Merkel, Xor, Eritrea or Mazol. Though given, the Thyzer are the most dominating of all of us, so

they had started the start period of this Tymex Date since the Fran galaxy was formed from the Quasars. They have calculated it to the most accurate level. On that basis, today is $^{332|12|2}$/13'14'8. The first three figures represent higher classification and the last three lower classification.'

Tara took a pause. She continued, 'That means 332 Tymilloy, 12 Lauy, 2 Hulloy, 13 Tymex 14 Tym and 8 Mex. After 4 Earth years equivalent time, it would become 9 Mex and likewise till 24 Mex and then it would become 15 Tym and likewise.'

'Interesting. So even this will hold good for parallel universe comparison. I guess this was the reason why you could manage the time paradoxes.' Dharma wondered.

'Wonderful. So, these are the twelve-time classifications. On that basis, our galaxy Fran was established almost thirteen billion Earth Years before.' Tara wanted to conclude this discussion.

'12,987,658,932 Xorian years or Earth years, to be precise. But this nonsensical time keeping calculation has to stop now. We need to leave.' Boro telepathized, seeming irritated, interrupting the discussion between Tara and Dharma.

'Where were you and Zoro? I didn't realize you both were gone for some time now.' Dharma said.

'My Lord, we are surrounded by enemies, so we both went to ensure our safety. Unfortunately, we have to leave. We have been traced.' Zoro telepathized.

Dharma wondered that on this planet so far away from the Xorian Empire, which had the sanctuary of two massive black holes, the Xorian had discovered them and sent some kind of force. Dharma was confused. He understood that now the time had come when he had to take on the mantle of the son of God. The Leader of all.

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## CHAPTER 9

# The Run

'Oh. So, Laura has finally messaged.' Tara telepathized to all. She was looking distraught. Dharma understood that things had turned a bit sour. Something was telling him that the danger was looming large.

'Who is Laura?' Dharma was confused.

'A trained spy. Maybe one of the best in business.' Boro telepathized to Dharma.

'She is the one who is right now mingled in the Xorian system. The Xorian spy network is controlled by a cyborg called Dias. Laura is part of that network but works for us.' Tara responded to end Dharma's query.

'We need to rush. But I don't know how that evil Dias found out that we are at Mazol. I thought their *Arepo* communicators could not penetrate this battery of black holes.' Boro telepathized to all, though his question was more rhetorical. He was not expecting any answers.

'May be Janak 290 was spotted and trailed.' Tara responded.

'That can be the only way. Otherwise, we are hiding at Mazol for so long,' Boro responded. He peered at Zoro. Zoro put his gaze down as if accepting the guilt.

'Now what. Do you think the Nonpareil Soldiery could be expected here any moment?' Tara telepathized with a tinge of shock visible in her tone.

'They would take some time before reaching here. We have a few Kels - Earth days - in our hands. But I am not sure whether that is enough.' Boro responded.

'If you all don't mind, can you explain the situation?' Dharma enquired.

'My Lord, we all are hiding. We were waiting for you and ensuring that our mission to liberate Eritrea from the evil clutches of Nokoevid could be

managed from this planet Mazol. We believed it was difficult for Nokoevid and his network of spies to find us here.' Zoro responded to Dharma.

'That is all because of Zoro. You were careless and gave away our position.' Boro telepathized to all while his tone was penetrating and piercing.

'I am extremely sorry, Sire. I never intended to. I don't even know how it happened.' Zoro responded.

'I feel it was not all Zoro's fault. Whatever limited I understand, Zoro might have left this planet Mazol forty Kel before. Because he took twenty Kel to reach Earth and then another twenty Kel to return.' Dharma telepathized to all. He was trying to fix the puzzle. He continued, 'I believe that when Zoro's Nifty entered the bridge which connects it with the parallel universe, it was spotted by the surveillance of Xor. I guess not often unknown Nifties fly across that bridge. They might have tailed this Nifty and landed at Mazol about the same time Zoro and I reached. And see immediately you got the message from Laura that we are spotted.'

'It means, my dear son of God, that it was Zoro's fault.' Boro telepathized with an incensed tone.

'No, Professor. This meant the idea of sending the Nifty from Mazol was wrong. To confuse the trail, this Nifty should have shot from some other place, and it should not have landed here. Instead, Zoro and I should have beamed here. So, it was a collective failure of planning.' Dharma concluded.

It gave Zoro a sense of respite. He could not believe that his lord would take his side and defend him before the short-tempered Prof. Boro.

Prof. Boro also understood that the blame was not on poor Zoro, but they had failed to plan properly. Now their trail was out. Nonpareil Soldiery was about to reach Mazol, and that only meant one thing, game over.

Boro responded to all, 'Laura has asked us to rush out of Wen to the city of Satrap crossing the entire planet Mazol.'

'From Wen to Satrap, that would be almost 5000 Um travel.' Tara responded. Looking at Dharma Tara telepathized, '5000 Um is equivalent to 5000 kilometres (Earth standard). We need to now cross the entire planet and reach the other side.'

'We need to hurry.' Boro telepathized.

'You are still fiddling with your equipment.' Laura telepathized in an angry tone while entering the makeshift abode. She saw Jolly with his equipment and the small droid assistant standing at some distance.

'Sorry, sweetheart. But I was waiting for you to return.' Jolly responded.

'Really. But you are on official duty still. I don't know why you've made me accompany you.' Laura was apparently looking annoyed.

'I guess you wanted to come with me rather than me wanting you here.' Spy 809, aka Jolly, telepathized in a ferocious tone. His eyes were red with anger. He gave a mental command, and suddenly the mini droid shot a ray towards Laura. The ray hit her wrists, and nanoparticles shot, converted into hard handcuffs.

'I wished you weren't on the other side.' Spy continued in a sorry tone. 'You forgot that we could read even *Stealth waves,* and I am not the only spy here. I have my friends nearby.'

'So, you have guessed.' Laura knew that she was now in enemy hands.

'Yes. The moment you sent signals to the traitors I was tailing, my spy colleague messaged that a *Stealth wave communication* had been made from a place nearby to the traitors. Someone had informed the traitors that we were tailing them. The signal was sent from some place nearby me. Then it was child's play to find out that you are the mole.' Jolly was furious.

'I wished you had not committed such sin.' Jolly continued. 'I have no option but to do this to you. Why Laura, I was in love with you. Why have you done such a thing?

'It is your cause versus mine.' Laura responded unruffled.

'You have no cause, Laura. These people whom you service are terrorists. They have brainwashed you. They are evil. They want to destroy the Xorian civilization altogether.' Spy was furious as well as disturbed seeing his love turning out to be a mole.

'You are serving your cause, and I am mine. Who is evil and who is not is a matter of perception.' Laura was unfazed by the circumstances. She was a trained soldier; she knew how to keep calm in all situations.

'I have no option but to take you to custody and produce you before my boss Dias.' Jolly telepathized with a painful tone. He had to somehow overcome the shock of his life.

'Why do you want me before that cruel cyborg. You can kill me right away.' Laura telepathized firmly.

'Killing will be an easy escape for a traitor like you. We have a different protocol in such situations.' Spy sheepishly telepathized.

'Haha. Don't worry, my love, I know what you mean. But you don't know what mettle I am made of. I am not going to tell you anything. None that I am aware of anything.' Laura was blunt and straight.

'That time only will tell, my dear.' The spy ordered the mini robot, who shot another ray which hit Laura, and she fell unconscious on the floor.

Jolly saw Laura with mixed emotions. He was in love with this girl. He thought that he had found the love of his life when he first met her in training. He never realized that Laura had shifted allegiance. Laura was part of the Xorian spy network, but later she resigned on the pretext that she had fallen in love with Jolly. She wanted to start a family with Jolly and wanted to lead a simple life.

Jolly never believed that it was all a lie. All Laura wanted was to be with Jolly so that she could help Boro, whom Jolly was tailing. But why? Why Laura? She was such a committed worker; Jolly had never seen a more efficient spy than her. She can't be compromised.

'Laura got caught. We need to save her. *Pure* signals disconnected.' Zoro telepathized to all in a disturbing tone. He could sense that Laura was in danger. Zoro had huge admiration for Laura, and he had never hidden that fact.

'Let it be Zoro. We have to leave from here immediately.' Boro was clear in his plan. There were pawns who needed to be sacrificed to win a larger game. One cannot be too emotional about it. Boro had always believed that 'the cause is bigger than individuals.'

'But we need to save her. Laura is caught. The '*Pure*' signals have terminated.' Zoro was panicking and relaying thoughts to all present.

'*Pure* signals'. Dharma asked.

'We establish *Pure* signals between two entities which send coordinates of each other and nothing else. These are highly encrypted and can't be discovered, unlike *Stealth* signals which are encrypted ways of transferring messages. But *Stealth* signals can be caught and decrypted. Therefore, we keep a '*Pure* signal connection, too, so that if any party wants to message that she/he is caught, they will simply disconnect the '*Pure* signal. This is how the other side comes to know that the spy is in trouble.' Zoro started explaining to Dharma the nuances of spy communication.

'Cut the crap. This aint no time for such detailed discussion on communique of spies.' Boro telepathized impatiently.

'But disconnection of pure signals means she is now in enemy hand. We need to save her. She is not far from here. I have her coordinate. Let's act before it is late, and they take her away.' Zoro telepathized in a panicky tone.

'Zoro, calm down. She has told us that we are being tailed. We now have interrupted all communications. No one can know what we are doing here. Before those spies of Xor connected again, we would have been to some other place. You keep things ready. We have to prepare for the exit.' Boro firmly rebutted the proposal of Zoro.

'No, we need to save Laura. We are at Mazol. We can easily save her. These spies may not be that many in number. We should immediately act.' Zoro insisted.

'We should help her.' Dharma intervened.

'Don't interfere when you don't understand. You may be the son of God for the believers, but for me, you are just a young guy who has to be trained. And as such, you don't know what you are saying.' Boro furiously telepathized to all.

'I aint any son of God; I don't even know why I will be addressed so. But I know one thing for sure, if your team member is in trouble, we should help at all costs. I am not commanding you; I have no authority, but at least Zoro and I can go and see if we can bring her here. If you already have initiated your defence and no one can know about your coordinates for some time, isn't that much time enough for us to fetch Laura and go to the safe house along with her? It serves a dual purpose. First, we save our team and instil confidence in all that we will come for everyone who is in trouble so tomorrow if anyone of us is in trouble, we know my team member will do whatever possible to save us, and second, purpose whatever secrets Laura knows that may not be out.' Dharma was talking like a leader.

'It seems you are not only naïve but stupid also.' Boro was furious to the core.

'But I agree with my brother. We should attempt to save her.' Tara intervened.

'You all have lost your mind. But if you want to commit suicide, I cannot help. Our systems protect the detection for another Ahom (two Earth hours) at max, and in between, we must prepare our journey. We don't have

any teleporters for Satrap. They can be trailed. So, we have to make this journey through Blackrock.' Boro conceded to the demands of his team.

'Blackrock.' Dharma was confused.

'My Lord, this is a car which runs at a speed of 1200 uma, i.e. 600 km per hour and an all-terrain vehicle which will cruise through water and mountainous hills and take us to our destination.' Zoro said.

'Better we educate him later. At present, if you want to go ahead with your stupid idea, better get Laura fast and let's leave quickly.' Boro was absolutely frustrated with the turn of events.

'Sire, it was my fault to bring Laura, I agree.' Spy 809 was on communicator reporting to his boss in Mazol. Jolly has never seen his boss. A mysterious person who was the chief spy and a close confidante of cyborg Dias.

'You are stupid to the core. Who brings one's girlfriends on such an important mission? If you lose these traitors, remember it will be the last day of your bloody stupid life.' Chief spy was known for being merciless.

'No, sire, I am completely in control. I will establish the signal.' Jolly was terrified.

'It won't be required. We are here.' Zoro telepathized to Jolly. Jolly turned and saw Zoro, Tara and Dharma inside the temporary structure.

The Chief spy immediately cut the signal, realizing the enemy's presence. Jolly was now surrounded by foes.

Before Jolly would have understood anything, Zoro raised his hand, and from the small invisible gadget embedded in the sub-dermal part of his wrist, a ray was shot. Jolly didn't get time to raise his shield, and the ray pierced his heart, and with a small spurt of blood, Jolly fell dead. It was not sure whether it was out of necessity or jealousy Zoro killed Jolly instead of merely stunning him and running away with Laura.

However, Zoro and others didn't realize that the mini droid, assistant of Jolly, can sense the danger, and it shot a lethal ray towards Zoro. Dharma jumped and pushed Zoro to safety. The ray, though, scraped the right shoulder of Dharma.

Dharma was in extreme pain, but before falling, he hit the mini robot hard with a karate kick that damaged the system of the mini robot. Tara shot at the droid through the sub-dermal blaster on her wrist, turning it into ashes in no time.

'Are you alright, my Lord?' Zoro asked Dharma. Zoro was mesmerized completely by Dharma, who had not only taken a stand to save Laura but now had saved Zoro's life. 'He indeed was the son of God, the true Saviour.' Thought Zoro.

'Let's leave quickly.' Tara telepathized.

Zoro picked Laura in his arms. Dharma held his right shoulder with his other hand. There was a cut with blood oozing out. However, it was not something which required urgent attention.

The team came out of the temporary abode, but it was not aware that there was another spy in the vicinity. Jolly never worked alone. He had a companion always who was just nearby. Jolly and his companion always used to chat through communication bounced from different locations so that anyone who intercepted their signals felt they were miles apart. Even Laura was not aware of this fact. The other spy was watching the incidents.

He aimed and shot lethal gamma rays at the Jolly's assailants. Dharma and team would not have survived this blast, but to their fortune, the temporary abode, upon the destruction of the mini-robot, shifted its shape to the all-terrain vehicle. This meant that Dharma, Tara and Zoro were shielded by this vehicle which got hit by the gamma blast and was shattered into pieces with a large noise. The impact of this attack was felt even by Boro, who was sitting in the Blackrock nearby.

'Com'on' Boro was frantic. 'Sit quickly inside. We need to rush. The other spy has spotted us, and he can blast us with his blaster. I don't know what weaponry he is carrying, but the range of it is enough to bring peril to us.'

Boro knew that the spy would not take much time, and he was training another shot. '*They all are going to die here only. It was a stupid idea to come and save this girl Laura. But it was this stupid boy Dharma who doesn't understand anything that has brought all of them to such danger.*' Boro thought.

The team, though, rushed inside the Blackrock, and it seemed that the spy was not prepared for attack. He was taking time to launch the second attack of the lethal ray.

'Calm down.' Dharma telepathized to Boro. 'How this black rock works. Take it towards the direction of the other spy.' Dharma commanded.

'Are you out of your mind? If we go near that spy, he will easily kill us.' Boro was furious.

'No, professor. He is expecting us to run away. We are on a suave vehicle. If I guess correctly, he has not hit the second shot yet because he wants to

take us all. He wants us all dead. So, he may be training the gun based on the anticipated moment of Blackrock. The moment we all are in Blackrock and move away from him, believe me, we will be hit by the lethal weapon.' Dharma telepathized to all-in-one go. He and others were not yet in the Blackrock.

Dharma continued, 'I request. March towards the spy. From where the shot was hit. He would get confused, and then we would change direction.'

They all jumped into the car through the open door. The door closed, and Blackrock marched towards the spy at a darting speed. Before the spy could change his trained gun, the Blackrock reversed the direction and whizzed past away.

As Dharma thought, the spy was confused when he saw all of them approaching him. He thought that they were going to come behind him, and instead of firing any shot, he rushed towards his safety. However, it was momentarily as he saw them reversing and running away. But because he was rushing towards safety, by the time he could have been back on his weapons to fire, Blackrock was many Ums away.

'You are an interesting character, my brother. You have shown impressive skills.' Tara was elated seeing such valour.

'How long will it take to go wherever we are going.' Dharma enquired.

'It will take another Ahom—2 Earth hours. And we will be approximately 1200 ums away from this place. From there, we will take a tunnel vehicle crossing a big sea underneath a tunnel, cover another 2000 ums and reach a new country in planet Mazol.' Zoro said politely. He deliberately spoke instead of telepathizing just to show a mark of respect to Dharma.

'Interesting. So, the planet of Mazol is divided into various countries. These are political boundaries,' Dharma telepathized to all.

'Yes, indeed, most of the planets and moons have different countries or provinces. Though those planets which were terraformed by Xor have uniform central governance, and for local issues, there are local administrators. However, Mazol is unique and similar to Eritrea. In Mazol, there are almost a hundred separate political provinces. They are called 'Desh'. Every Desh is governed by its own leader; few are monarchy, few democracies as you have seen at Earth, few are governed

by military leadership, few by religious priests, and few are by the dominant caste leader.'

'That is interesting. Mazol is such a diverse planet.'

'So is Eritrea. Eritrea also has many different political clusters, and before the Xorian control, it had primarily four political clusters. The most dominant among them was the Heous (pronounced Hiyas), followed by the Liberals, Yakuts and Heretics. All these were special and different for various reasons.'

'Yes, I have read about them during my travel to Mazol.' Dharma responded.

He looked at Zoro, who was peering at the unconscious Laura. Tara understood that Zoro had already given material to Dharma about Eritrea.

'That's good. So, I don't need to discuss Eritrea with you.' Tara telepathized.

'It would be great if you could throw some light. It will do no harm.' Dharma responded.

'Let me see what you know.' Tara teased.

'Ok. If you can bear my monologue, then let me try to be Prof. Boro.' Dharma telepathized with a tinge of naughtiness. He gave a deep look to scowling Prof. Boro.

Blackrock was on auto mode; it needed no driver. All were sitting tight, Laura was still unconscious, and Zoro was tending to her. Blackrock was cruising at ultra-high speed towards the prefilled destination. Dharma could see forests, deserts, and mountains whizzing past in a jiffy.

Dharma concentrated on what he had learnt and continued his monologue. 'In Eritrea, there are four prominent intelligent races. The most dominating is Angelan, similar to the fabled angels on Earth. The Angelan have a unique feature, namely the sentient exo-skeletal. Angelan's can grow two additional hands at will, and their wings could be so tightly fixated that in the normal course, it would be difficult to differentiate between them and Fleshy."

Dharma paused for a moment. Tara responded, 'Good. Continue Dharma. Complete your knowledge about Eritrea. It will help you in learning about your own planet in greater detail.'

Dharma continued, 'Another race is The Centaur which is like the mythical characters on Earth. The third is Acquian which are those who stay underwater. They cannot spend time outside water without support. The Acquians are powerful, and they control the whole ocean. Lastly are

the Fleshy, and you and I belong to this race. The Fleshy are similar to Namuh of Xor or humans of Earth. In Eritrea, the Fleshy is deemed to be less powerful. Because in all past wars before the modern industrial age, either the Angelan won because they could fly and use four hands to shoot arrows and wield weapons. The Centaurs are the fastest, and thus they can use their speed. Mostly Centaurs always served the Angelan as their war horses. Thus, Centaurs are always treated as supporters of Angelan. The Acquians are invincible underwater. We, the Fleshy, have tender skins and no such ability.'

'Wonderful Dharma. You have great retention ability. You can manage so much without using the cerebral transfer technique but by simple reading. It is impressive indeed.' Tara was impressed. Because for them to read, books were art long extinct. They had to rely on the cerebral transfer of knowledge.

Dharma continued, without paying much heed to the praise showered upon him, 'However, with recent technological development, even the Fleshy at Eritrea are making a mark. Like post the commencement of the modern age, most fighter jet pilots were Fleshy, and likewise, in current times, Fleshy are the ones who understand the manufacture of exotic star ships in Eritrea.'

Tara intervened, 'Bof has already predicted that the modern age would belong to Fleshy.'

'That's interesting. Four intelligent races on one planet. Eritrea is a unique planet.' Dharma said, carefully dodging to comment on the book of faith.

'It indeed is. Dharma, you would appreciate that in all other great intelligent civilizations, like, Thyzer, there is only one type of race which evolved and developed. Similarly, the Merkels are only one root intelligent race spread across the entire Merkel realm. Xorian, you can say, are slightly better as they have two intelligent races, the Namuh and Mag. But Mag is so far behind the technological development they may not be considered in the fray. Only Eritrea had four different intelligent races, all developed, evolved, and even today, every single race is relevant.'

'I agree, Tara. Eritrea, in that sense, is unique. I am really proud to be from such a great planet.' Dharma responded. It was the first time Dharma had linked himself to Eritrea and not to Earth. It was heartening for Tara. Finally, Dharma connected himself to the cause.

'I am impressed Dharma. You have started connecting with us.' Tara exclaimed.

'I have to. I have no other option. More so, I feel that the sooner I embrace my destiny, the faster I will be in a position to help.'

'Thanks, Dharma.'

'No need to thank me, Tara. This is my destiny. My purpose in life. I am ready now to help in whatever manner I can.'

Dharma was now ready to embrace his destiny, and his nemesis was ready with his plan. Dharma had to soon act to ensure that they were out of trouble.

The Chief Spy at Mazol received the message from the other spy. The chief spy shouted on the other side of the call. Though this was a video call, the chief spy's video was hidden, as always in his communication. The figure of their Lord Nokoevid was permanently fixated as a background. This was the indication that there was communication with the chief spy. These spies at Mazol had only heard about him; no one had ever seen him.

'You allowed the targets to run away. Both you and that Spy 809 are useless.' The telepathized communication was in a terse tone.

'I am sorry, sire. They duped me by coming at me at tremendous speed …'

'Cut the crap. You are stupid. I give you an Ahom's time. Find them wherever they are. They might be somewhere on the planet Mazol. Wherever they are, at the mountain peak, or depth of the ocean or hiding under the foliage of a forest or under cover of sand dunes, I want them spotted in an Ahom's time. Else you will spend the rest of your filthy life at X-cage.'

Chief Spy cut the communicator. The other spy was petrified. He was not sure where to spot these evil targets. He went into deep thought. Few Kel before they came to know that Boro was hiding at Mazol. It was at this time they all came to this planet secretly. No one knew their presence because the dunderhead Mazolians did not have the technique to spot an alien spaceship. That too sophisticated Nifty they could never spot.

He and Jolly, with Jolly's traitor girlfriend, came onto the planet. With great difficulty found the hideout of Boro and established a peep. But then this Laura spoiled the plan. Boro had now run away. Mazol was

a huge planet; it would not be easy to again spot him. More so, Boro was staying on this planet now for around a Tym (100 Earth years), and he had made strong friendships with the 'inbreds.' These dunderheads Mazolian and their political leaders were in awe of this terrorist. He was raining money. He was getting the support of Merkel. Else it was nigh impossible to maintain this lifestyle. A nifty, black rock, beaming '*Zeacon*' teleporters.

Then his thought took a different turn. Who was this Chief spy? He was one among them, then why did he not disclose his identity to them. They were a team, after all. More so, when did this chief spy come to this planet? He was on Mazol even before them. How he knew that Boro would be here. On whose instructions was Chief Spy working.

Could this be possible that this chief spy was also a trick of the trickster Boro? The spy thought to message Dias. He immediately primed to send the *Arepo* message to Dias about what transpired.

He was about to send the message regarding the sad death of Jolly–spy 809, the assassination attempt on Governor Kor and that one Chief Spy wants all updates about the mission?

However, before the *Arepo* Communicator could send the message, the spy received a call. It was from the Chief Spy who had called. The spy responded, 'Yes, sire.'

'I had a change of mind. I thought that now we two were only there on this planet. We should not work in silos. I am sending you my address, you come to me. It is better that we work as a team like you and Jolly were.'

'Ok, sire.'

The Chief Spy cut the communication and sent his address. It was in the city of Zanzirab, country Ogo, around 2000 um (2000 km–Earth standards) away from where the spy was.

The spy was now confused. Should he tell Dias and shoot the message he was about to send. What if Dias got angry? Dias did not like to be disturbed by lower-level agents. He was known to be short-tempered. More so, now he was meeting this chief spy in person. He could find out all these details when he meets.

The spy deleted the message that he was about to send to Dias. He saw the address and soon geared himself to reach the latitude and longitude provided. The map showed that the chief spy was in a dense forest. It would take a while for the spy to reach that place. Boro would get some

respite, the spy thought. But he had no other way to find out about Boro. He needed to work with the chief spy and figure out a way to again find that terrorist.

'Understood. So Xorian Empire consists of thirty-six different intelligent races spread across fifty-six stellar systems and 409 celestial bodies. And I feel all these varied thirty-six races are near hominid races.' Dharma telepathized to Tara. The Black Rock was now going through the dense forest and covering the distance rapidly.

'Well, you may say Acrimean, Nadriman and Ausulvanian are Namuh. Mag and Magmu are evolutionary cousins of Namuh. Therefore, these five races are near-human types. Many of the remaining thirty-one races in the Xorian Empire are merely derivates of these five like the Rar of X141 were the Nadriman and Ausulvanian who were shoved there in the past. They had grown distinctly because of the harsh conditions at planet X141.' Tara responded.

'So, you meant to say all the thirty-six intelligent races in the Xorian Empire were some derivation of human races.' She was interrupted by Dharma in between.

'There were few exceptions like the Hum of planet John, the Garliquian of planet Unique etc.,' Tara continued. 'These were different races, but they are also carbon-based life forms.'

Dharma again intervened, 'I understood Tara. I got your drift. Eritrea, in that sense, was unique that on one planet, four different races evolved together.' Dharma conceded. There was no point fighting with Tara, who wanted to establish that Eritrea was a better planet than all others in the galaxy.

'Yes, Dharma. But just to put across my point, there are Hums or Garliquians etc., but they are also one intelligent race on their planet. So almost all planets had one root intelligent race, which crossed the Ambition threshold and became a superior specie controlling its planet. But Eritrea has four different species that evolved and crossed the Ambition threshold. There were many wars among them, but ultimately, they all co-existed. And that's why our Bof says that Eritrea, the land of light, is different and special. It says not to idol worship anyone but to believe in the supreme God who has no existence. Which is supreme enough not to be defined

by any boundaries. That's why we believe only in Eritrea all the intelligent seeds rooted by Mutochthons flourished, unlike others where only one dominant race crossed the Ambition Threshold.' Tara telepathized and eulogized Bof. It could be felt that Tara had a different sense of comfort and contentment when she gave examples proving that Bof was right.

Dharma somehow was not convinced that God would take pain in dictating a book, but he kept his thoughts to himself and telepathized, 'But I am not sure whether it is because of Mutochthons seeded four intelligent races in Eritrea as it was special, or they have seeded many intelligent races in all planets but only a few prominent races survived. Like on Earth, homo-sapiens only survived and grew.'

'That is also possible. But we believe in what Bof says.'

'What about Mazol?' Dharma did not want to get into the sensitive topic of religion and faith. Because he himself was an atheist and thus believed in science only. But he never imposed his belief on others and values the belief of others. His foster parent believed in the Hindu religion, and Dharma was always in sync with them without compromising his own thoughts too.

'Mazol again only has one type of race, 'Muksa.' In Earth's terminology, you can treat them as human-snake. They are poisonous and kill other animals with their poison. They can stretch their body to an extent and can climb on walls. However, technological advancement is not to a great extent here. They believe in idol worshipping, and the entire planet has one religion.'

'Interesting. So, in Mazol, there are many political countries but one religion. But we are now leaving one country, I believe Ghour and going to another country Satrap. Won't we require any permission or visa for inter-country travel?'

'Haha. You are too bogged down with Earth concepts. In Mazol, there are many countries, but there is no visa required for travel. Anyone can freely travel to another country. We simply have to register, and that can be done remotely.' Tara explained.

'You were telling me about Eritrea. I am curious to learn about my mother planet.' Dharma said.

'In Eritrea, we have four intelligent races, which are further divided based on their political affiliation into various countries. Like the most powerful country, Heous (pronounced Hiyas) has all four races. The leadership core committee, which takes all the major decision in Heous, consist of seven

members who all are equal and entitled to one vote each. They all have members from all these four intelligent races. Despite Fleshy being the hated race in Eritrea, few Fleshies, because of their extreme capabilities, have still achieved remarkable feet in Eritrea. The Acquian mostly control the ocean and have their own political countries across oceans.'

'Eritrea is a complex planet. I find it more complex than Xor.'

'That is correct. But now you know a lot about Xor. You should know about Eritrea a bit.'

'I would love to know about Eritrea.'

'Here, when Xor was developing as an inter-stellar civilization, Eritrea too was thriving, though with respect to space expeditions, they were just toddlers. They had experimented, but their rockets could not even breach the escape velocity.'

'Oh, so Eritreans were not in a position to explore even nearby space or establish satellites.'

'No Dharma, I meant to say that they were exploring. But in armaments, they have explored and had developed nuclear weapons.'

'That is interesting. That they have nuclear weapons but not space technology.'

'See every planet and civilization develop differently. Nuclear weapons were precisely the sore point. The Fleshy in Eritrea believed the focus should also be on a space expedition. But Eritrea was primarily controlled by Heous, and the majority of Heous were Angelan. Who didn't believe much in space technology though they had sent radio signals in space to attract alien lives?'

'Maybe that's why they wanted to have sophisticated arms. What if aliens are hostile?' Dharma said with a straight face. Not sure whether it was sarcastic or genuine.

'Maybe. So, I was saying that Eritreans were developing well. But Fleshy felt that they were ill-treated by others. They were just waiting for an opportune time to showcase their supremacy. In the modern industrial era, Fleshy did so well in aviation. Almost all the fighter jets and civil and commercial planes were driven by Fleshy. Soon a group of Fleshy who wanted to prove that they could do great in space technology started experimenting with the material called 'black stone'. This material, 'black stone,' was used by all to create idols for God. Fleshy believed in Bof, and thus they were against idol worship. In one of the provinces of Heous, a group of Fleshy started stealing the idols and dismembered them to make

use of the material for rocket fuel. When others came to know about it, a mass riot against Fleshy started in Heous everywhere. It even impacted other countries but not as much as in Heous. In various provinces of Heous, anywhere Fleshy is found, whether male, female, adult or toddler, was burnt alive.'

'That is a terrible thing. Why punish the entire race for the crime of few?'

'That's true. This made the Fleshy go underground, and they hid in various places. In jungles, in the desert, in volcanic regions.'

'This was when even Eritrea was also going to face its biggest nemesis, the Xor knocking on the door. Though to remedy the situation, a new province in Heous, namely Lux Fulgor, was given to Fleshy. They entered into an agreement with all others that they shall keep away from 'black stone'.

'But how Xor did come to know about Eritrea.'

'See the Fleshy when experimented with 'black stone' accidentally shot rockets propelled with this material in space. They didn't know at that time, but these rockets floated into outer space and were picked up by the Xorian surveillance. Xor then sent artificial space drones for further enquiry, and they discovered that there was a civilization in Eritrea. More so, they found that the material 'black stone' is actually 'Antium'. This can propel ships into hyper-drive mode and give super-luminal speed.'

'Oh, that's interesting. I remember you said this is the time when Quanion was not discovered, and neither were *Arepo* waves discovered. At this time, the max speed was the stargaze speed. Only Merkels had the capability of travelling using 'Industrium' material at a max speed of a hundred times light speed. At such time, if they discover that this material 'Industrium', which Xorian call 'Antium', is in abundance in Eritrea, so Xor would definitely like to control this planet and get this material.'

'You are smart, Dharma. But things were not as simple as you are presuming.' Tara telepathized.

'It means there is much more than what meets the eye?' Dharma was curious.

'Yes. Let me utilize this time while we travel; let me continue with the story of the first Eritrean War. Now you have already understood about the Xorian history, Tymex, mighty Thyzer and Merkel. This is the time period when the *Arepo* waves and Quanion were still not discovered. But Xorians have lost to Merkel, and they have met Thyzers.' Tara continued.

Whereas Zoro was busy giving basic medication to still fainted Laura.

Boro was busy in his own world, reading something on the VR (virtual reality) screen before him. Blackrock, once fed with the destination, will take the passengers to the destination on its own.

'We are talking about 500 to 600 Earth years ago from today.' Dharma exclaimed.

'Very true. You are a quick learner.' Tara was happy. 'Around six Tym (600 Earth years) before the present time, the first Eritrean war took place.' Tara herself took a deep breath and went into deep thought.

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## CHAPTER 10

# A Peep into the Past

*600 Earth years before Dharma had arrived in Muverse.*
*Planet X141 (outermost in the Xorian Empire).*

Two people were sitting in the luxurious suite of the most fearsome person in the Xorian Empire. The ligneous table across which the two were seated was covered with a silk tablecloth. Many pieces of equipment that could give competition to any sci-fi movie were spread across. A few droid assistants were moving here and there.

'My Lord, the forces are ready. Our spaceships, special weapons, individual armoured fighters, and the AGI troops are ready. The supply ships have already been ordered to march, given that they are heavy and slow-moving vehicles.' General Viz reported to Great Lord Ralf, the elected Supreme Commander of the Xorian Empire.

'Good General.' Ralf responded.

'But I need to discuss in our war council the further minutiae.' Ralf ordered.

Shortly the war council was summoned in person. A large auditorium filled with many Namuh, cyborgs, different alien species and droids. Everyone was seated in their respective seats.

'You all know that this is the most important quest for all of us. This can change the fate of the Xorian Empire.' Ralf shouted, despite the sophisticated mic floating everywhere.

Ralf paused to catch a glimpse of the audience, which consisted of the who's who of the galactic empire. These were his most trusted elite members. He continued, 'We need to ensure that we not only capture this planet but do it as fast as possible. We don't want to give any hint to Thyzerians or Merkelite about this planet.'

'We have already ordered our supply chains to establish the base near the planet, and soon our troops will be ordered to march.' Ralf said after another small pause.

'Yes, sir. Also, we will ensure that our troops create camps between every Mylight (four light-years) distance, and our council will keep on moving from our planet to these camps slowly. Because the distance is humongous, and we have never done such a mission in the past. We have to be very careful. The space can be merciless; remember that.' General Viz said.

'Good. These camps will help us in ensuring that our supply chain remains intact. Though I don't foresee any threat from the natives as whatever little we have been told by our astrophysicist that the aliens on that planet are not yet that evolved to answer the superior weaponry of ours.' Ralf said.

'But sir, we have not talked about this mission to our public. We are spending almost 50% of our net available cash flow, and we will capture an alien life which is more than a hundred Mylight (400 light years) away. It is going to take an eternity to fulfil this mission.' The Minister of Health intervened.

'You always have been negative, Dr Nicator. We are almost immortals. There is no known disease that kills us. We have been exploring space and have already terraformed so many planets. Space is not something we should be scared of.' General Viz said.

'And most importantly, if we are successful, we will be ruling the galaxy. It is full of 'Antium.' Ralf said.

*The material Antium was referred to by Merkel as Industrium, and Eritrea referred to it as a black stone. It was the material that would help in making warp drive engines for Indpro space shuttles.* Tara's voice could be heard Dharma explaining the terms while he was watching the pictographic depiction of the past events.

'But my lord, if anything goes wrong, if the alien life is strong there and gives us resistance, if some hidden space obstacles hit us, some black hole, some other element, then we risk losing everything.' Dr Nicator cautioned.

'So, what do you want. We remain as is. We just let Thyzer and Merkel dominate us. What if Thyzer or Merkel discovered that planet. What if they capture it? Then they are the ones who are going to rule over the entire Fran. You don't understand Nicator that 'Antium' has strange properties. With its help, we can create superluminal ships that will not

help us explore faster but also help us in making advanced weaponry. This is a lifetime opportunity.' Ralf dictated.

'But sir, at least we can take a public consensus. Because the journey we are embarking on is not going to get over shortly. We are committing more than a Tym (100 Earth years) of Xorian money and energy to this. Whereas our elected term is left only for a term slightly more than twelve Mex (forty-eight Earth years). So even probity suggests we should do a plebiscite.' Nicator pleaded.

'You are as dumb as you look.' Ralf growled.

'If I make this project public, the news will travel first to Thyzerians or Merkelite, and then they will start reaching this planet. We must do this in complete secrecy.' Ralf shouted.

Ralf then glanced purposefully at the robotic soldiers that were present there.

'Take Nicator out of the room. I don't want him in this council. We need to have another head of medicine who shall be with us in the war council.' Ralf ordered.

Nicator left the room, thinking he had done whatever he could to bring sense to these stupid leaders who were risking the Xorian Empire. They were committing just too much of resources to a seemingly impossible task. If the mission fails, Xor would be left with nothing; it would be doomed. The planets, space cities, asteroids, moons etc., on which at present Xorian suzerainty was writ large, would secede; they would declare their independence. They had already tried it in the past.

'Stupid people are the worst to have in a mission as important as this.' Ralf said, exhausted by the stupid advice of Nicator.

'Jason, are our communication lines ready?' Ralf looked at the Minister of Technology and Communication.

'Yes, sir. We have created the communication cells and will keep the lines ready.' Jason said politely.

'Jason, show me the map from X141 to this alien planet which is filled with 'Antium'.' Ralf said.

'Sure, sir.' Jason sent a mental command to a subdermal device attached to its forearm, and a big screen appeared, visible to all present. A star map appeared before the artificial screen. The Xorian Empire was visible, and at the outer periphery was X141. From this planet, many solar systems away, was the Uco wormhole; from that wormhole, after many solar systems away, was planet Eritrea. All the areas were mapped and named.

'Sir, as you all can see, we are here on planet X141 our military outpost. All the battalions of Nonpareil Soldiery are present here. Here we have everything that we need for this mission. But in this war, the biggest enemy of ours is distance. Eritrea, our target is 4.95 Tymlight (495 light years) away.' Jason explained.

'We know these things. Cut the crap and come to the main point.' Ralf said authoritatively.

'Sorry, sir. But just bear with me for a few more moments. These details are necessary for the understanding of all.'

'Ok. Continue but make it fast.'

'So, I was saying that Eritrea is 4.95 Tymlight away. I have divided this into Heaurs (1.5 trillion km). So we have to cover a distance of 3112 Heaurs.'

The map showed the distance divided into Heaurs. They were marked from 1 to 3112.

'Now we need to know what all we have. We have fifteen Stargaze Savitra65 ships. You know this; still, for the sake of completeness, in one Savitra65, there would be fifty AGI and fifty natural Nonpareil Soldiers. Every Nonpareil Soldier laced with Nonpareil armour and weaponry alone is enough to destroy a large army of the enemy. These soldiers are further divided into avionics, water fighter, and all-terrain fighter divisions.' Jason paused.

Jason glanced across to gauge the sense of his audience. He continued, 'Then there is heavy weaponry, foodstuff, medicine and other technical equipment. Also, we have the technicians and cyber expert which can hack into any systems of defence that the target may have.'

Minesh, who was in charge of cerebral droids, intervened, 'But do we need to send such a huge part of Nonpareil Soldiery. Our initial reconnaissance and later interaction with the in-bred has made it absolutely clear that Eritrea has an intelligent life in the lower half of the IP-2 category. They haven't developed technology that could match us. I don't think we need fifteen Savitra65 ships because that means sending fifteen battalions to Eritrea. The supply ships also have to be that many, and they don't have stargaze speed.' He was sure that Ralf would like his idea. The Ministers under Ralf had only one agenda of impressing him. The irony was that they didn't think what was appropriate for the situation, but their agenda was to only see what would Ralf's ear like.

'I agree with Minesh. We don't need to commit such a huge part of Nonpareil Soldiery. I believe two Savitra65 would be enough. We only need to capture the 'Antium' from there primarily. I don't even foresee any casualty from our side. They don't have a sophisticated defence system. Those in-bred are no match to us.' Ralf was clear about his strategy.

'But Sir. Post-victory, we need to control a huge planet. We need to plan for that. Also, we need to be mindful that once we have this planet, Eritrea, there is a possibility of Merkel backlash. They may take up this issue before Tymex.' Jason protested. He wanted to score a brownie point before Ralf.

'These are political decisions. Tymex, I will handle it. You simply need to liaise better with the super egoistic Thyzerians. As long as that is done, Tymex will not do anything. It has never interfered with the status quo. We have learnt our lessons well as how to handle them. You leave them up to me.' The liaison minister Vrun confidently spoke. He also wanted to give the false certainty to Ralf that all the areas were covered.

'Then let's proceed with two Savitra65.' Jason continues. Ralf ordered.

'Ok, Sir. So, we will send two Savitra65 ships. They travel at stargaze speed and will reach Uco Wormhole in approximately one Tym period, 24.4 Mex (97.5 Earth years), to be precise. This Wormhole is a naturally traversable wormhole, and from the Mayo Corporation, we have purchased the technique of traversing this Wormhole.'

'But isn't Mayo Corporation owned by Mishian. They operate from Shai.' Ralf asked.

'Yes, sir. This is owned by Melange, but we need this technology. We have paid heavily for this. Because otherwise reaching Eritrea is impossible, leave alone capturing it.' Jason justified his decision to obtain the technology from the Mishian. Everyone in the war council knew that Ralf hated the Mishian. Ralf has won the Supreme Commander position on the cry of 'Pure Acrimean Superior Xorian.' He was the most conservative and fierce character, and if, for this most important mission, he must take the help of those lowly Mishian, it was against his pride.

'Ok. Proceed.' Ralf uncharacteristically kept silent on this. He also was sure that if this mission was to be accomplished, he must let his ego take the back burner for some time.

'This Uco Wormhole will be traversed based on the technology transferred by Mishian, and the two Savitra65 would reach just 2.5 My light (ten light years) away from Eritrea. So in around another four

Mex (sixteen Earth years), we would be in the Eritrean environment. Without giving any warning, we can simply attack and capture the Eritrean planet.'

'But would our soldiers have enough food and supplies to survive this long journey' One war council member asked.

'Our soldiers will be in slumber mode. They will only be woken up by the droids once we have entered the Eritrean atmosphere,' Jason replied.

'But who will command the Savitra65s then.' Another member asked.

'It would be under the command of Droids.'

'But whether giving the artificially intelligent droids such an important task ok?' Enquired Jovon. He continued, 'Though we know that we have reached a high level of sophistication and even the droids think like us. Still, the strategic decision cannot be left to them. Because our experiences in the past have shown that nothing can beat the Namuhian consciousness. AGIs may not be in a position to take such a decision when encountering never-seen-before circumstances. So I would suggest that the command shall be with one of the Acrimean commanders for both ships. There can be a droid in another ship commanding it but mirroring the decision taken by the Acrimean commander.' Jovun, the Psychological chief of the Xorian Empire, suggested. He was well respected by Ralf. Jovun was one of the best in business and has studied a lot about various races, including the AGI and how each behaves in various circumstances.

'Jason, why not you take command of this mission. You take it over, and once you reach Eritrea, you become the chief there.' Ralf suggested.

'Sure, sir. This would be a great honour.' Jason responded. Jason knew very well that Ralf didn't like no as an answer. Jason had no choice. More so, he was happy because it was he who had prepared the detailed blueprint of this mission and had spent many sleepless nights. Now if Ralf was giving him the opportunity to be the head of the planet, why should he let the opportunity go.

'Going forward, as the distance is huge, we need on transport vessel to carry all the material to establish the factory at Eritrea for creating the Hyper-drive propelled shuttles with 'Antium'. Once those vessels are ready, we can hopefully cover the distance between Eritrea to the Uco wormhole in one Franc (two Earth months) and from the other side of the Uco wormhole to X141 in three Francs. (six Earth months)

'Yes, that's correct. Our dependency on Merkelite will also end. Right now, we have to shell out a huge amount of money and resources to get

the 'Industrium' and the technology for making the Shuttles with hyper-drives. These bloody Merkels only allow us the ride on payment of cost per trip on these Indpros and don't sell the shuttles to us. Unless we have our own such shuttles, we can never ever defeat these flaxen-skinned morons.' Ralf's contempt towards Merkel was well known.

The Merkels had developed the technology of Hyper-Drive propellant space shuttles, which was called Indpro, with a max speed of a hundred times faster than light. This helped Merkel to travel to Xorian territory and trade with them. Xorian needed this technology because their Empire now stretched to far-flung places. Like X141 from mother planet Xor was around 350 light years, and Xorian needed Merkel's shuttles to carry their goods and people in reasonable time to such places.

Merkel knew about this dependency on Xorian and charged exorbitant amounts in return. Xorian had a complaint to Tymex about these huge charges but to no avail. Ralf thus hated this profiteering and wanted to create his indigenous industrial unit to manufacture such shuttles. The technology was decoded by the Xorian scientist, but the biggest problem was that the material 'Industrium', which Xorian called 'Antium,' was unavailable in this vast Xorian Empire. Then once out of the blue, Xorian discovered the planet Eritrea, full of 'Antium'. Since then, Ralf has been interested in Eritrea. He had sent many probes to confirm. It had taken huge time, but Ralf ultimately came to know for sure that Eritrea had a huge 'Antium.' Ralf was clear that Eritrea would be the central industrial unit to manufacture the Antium shuttles.

'But the transport ships would take a huge time to reach Eritrea. I don't think this is a good idea. If we capture Eritrea and don't start the production of Indpro shuttles soon, we will lose. Because Merkels will come to know about it, and who knows, they will reach there, drive us out and capture Eritrea. We need to be very careful in our planning.' Juvon spoke again. This time on a topic not of his expertise, he was cautioning the war council about the right consequences.

'Rightly said Juvon. I feel we should send two more Savitra65 but let them contain only the material and expert technicians so that we can create the first few shuttles.' Ralf commanded.

'Ok, Sir. I will tinker with the plan accordingly. We would send four Savitra65 ships, all in my command, with AGI droids in control of others under my supervision. Only two would have the military equipment, and the soldiers remaining would contain the technicians and the material to

forge the super-luminal shuttle. We shall all be leaving simultaneously.' Jason concluded.

'Good. Now let's come to the finer details.' Ralf gave the command to inter-stellar travel expert Sumatra. Sumatra was a Nadriman working for Ralf. He specialized in inter-stellar travel and was a renowned astrophysicist in the entire Xorian Empire.

'We are going to cross eight solar systems before reaching this point.' Sumatra took over the mantle from Jason. He confidently put across his points. He continued, 'These suns would provide enough radiation for our Mun-nom chambers to keep the propulsion at a steady speed. The food pills can be stocked, and 'vigour evanescent' can be stored. We don't contemplate any problem in this journey except that we must wait for almost a Tym. Hopefully, in this relatively long period, there ain't any material development which makes this journey fruitless.' Sumatra was stark opposite to Juvon. He was quite a pessimist and always pointed out the negatives in any scheme. Ralf didn't like this attitude of Sumatra. But he was the best in business who understood space and celestial bodies like the back of his palm. Ralf had no choice but to have him in this most important war council. The fact that Sumatra was a Nadriman and still went this high in his career means he was indeed special.

'Don't unnecessarily create panic when no cause exists.' Barked Ralf. 'What can change in a Tym. One Tym back what was there which is so starkly different from today. One Tym will pass just like that. We have to only ensure that those Merkels should not know about our adventure. Because they would never like the Xorian to have an unlimited supply of Antium. The only technology where we lag behind is cruising fast in space. We cannot depend upon Merkels for this. I need to ensure that we, the Xorian, become the supreme race in space; for that, we have to get this 'Antium'. Once we are equal to Merkels in the super-luminal space drive, we will be powerful. Right now, to even govern my own empire, I have to depend upon the Merkels. I just can pity myself that for this great mission, I had to charter Merkel's ship to reach X141 from Xor. This is what antagonizes me. This makes me feel that we are inferior. We have to show the Merkels that Xorian's were, are and will remain superior to them.' Ralf was furious. This long monologue was evidence of that.

'Sorry, sir. So, I come to the second part of the journey. Here we have very limited expertise. How to safely traverse the wormhole we are completely dependent upon the Merkelite technology. Though they have

been known to traverse many wormholes, the calculation of each wormhole is different. Each wormhole is a different story, and we can only hope that the technology and the codes provided by the Merkelite Company Mayo Corporation are correct. Though each Mayo Corporation contract comes with an indemnity provision that, in case their code fails, they pay twice the amount of money they have charged. However, if we lose here, we are not only losing money but hope. Hope to be the best in the galaxy.' Sumatra took a pause to absorb whether all others were on the same page or not.

'Okay. It seems logical.' Ralf appreciated the detailed preparation. He always liked people who were doers.

Ralf was happy with the plan. The only concern for him now was that he had to win another term. He wanted this war council under his command to be present when Eritrea was captured. He had to ensure that he won the next term. He swirled his chair towards General Viz.

'General Viz, how many troops are we having on Nothing Planet.' Ralf suddenly asked Viz.

Viz was perplexed. He wasn't expecting a question on Nadus out of nowhere. However, he was someone who was on top of his stuff. With a little pause, he responded, 'Sir, around 5 % of our total strength. We have only 25% to defend our inner circle and to crush the rebellion in our terraformed planets, if any.'

'Hmm. Is it possible that we, from this 25%, send another 10% to 'the Nothing Planet'?' Ralf said.

'But sir, the Nothing Planet has not rebelled. Their rebellion happened in the past and was successfully crushed. They are paying their taxes generally on time. We have no reasons. Yes, that is true that there were many demonstrations against Xorian rule, but they were all peaceful.' Viz said.

'That's true. But Viz, you don't understand politics. For this mission to be successful, it is incumbent that this War Council remains the same till we succeed. For this, I have to win the election. This is a secret mission; I cannot announce this publicly till we have Eritrea in our grip. Why the people will elect me unless we can demonstrate that there is a huge threat from Nothing Planet. They are always known to be short-tempered people. If we can create some kind of hostility but only that much which our 15% remaining troops can handle, we can divert the attention of our public, and we can say that if we are not elected, then there is a genuine threat of secession.' Ralf said.

'Sir, you know politics better. Our troops can easily handle the rebellion of Nothing Planet.' Viz responded.

'Great. I then want you to ensure that the rebellion at Nothing Planet continues but don't crush them brutally. Ensure they keep fighting for the next Tym (100 Earth years).' Ralf smiled.

'I have a query', the first time Dharma intervened. 'How come these people are planning for a Tym. I understand that it is a period in excess of a hundred Earth years.'

'You have come from Earth, so you are finding this unusual. There, a hundred Earth years is a huge time.' Lady Tara telepathized. 'But Xorians have advanced to such levels that Xorians fear none, no bacteria, virus, the disease can kill them every cure is known, except at the time when they travel in space and land on different planets or celestial bodies, there can be some unknown diseases. But the travesty is that despite the intelligent life becoming immortal, the maximum fatality of intelligent life still happens at the hand of other intelligent life.'

'I understand that. On Earth, too, human's biggest enemy is humans. Thanks for answering the query.' Dharma said.

Before Lady Tara could continue, a big blast attracted their attention. The projectile came from far away; and missed Blackrock by a faint margin.

'Rush, we have to leave immediately.' Zoro telepathized.

'What was this blast.' Dharma enquired.

'We have been discovered. I told you that there are spies everywhere. They have found out about the location where Professor Boro is hiding. We cannot use the Satrap tunnel anymore. Seem that those spies have found our path.' Zoro telepathized.

'But who are they? Who wants to kill Professor Boro.' Dharma asked in excitement.

'Your questions cannot be answered here. Just shut up and follow orders.' Boro shouted, and Dharma felt as if this telepathic message had shaken his head instead of receiving the waves quietly.

'We have to abandon this 'Blackrock'. We need to mingle in the street, leaving our vehicles and other stuff. That's the only way right now to lose the tail.' Zoro hurriedly telepathized.

Dharma didn't understand anything but knew he had to run with these people. He knew no one here.

Not long after the blast, they all exited the Blackrock and commanded it to go to a distant place. Laura was still unconscious, and thus Zoro had lifted her in his arms. They all started walking endlessly through some kind of jungle. For the first time, Dharma saw the dresses of Boro, Tara and Zoro getting converted to a completely new fashion. Though the dressing sense was strikingly similar to how people on Earth wear dresses.

'Don't worry, Dharma. Our dresses are made up of picabots, a small material which we can command through mental waves. You were told about this, right. Therefore, we can change them to anything we like. Many people also commit suicide because of this. The dress can be easily commanded to create a noose. Nevertheless, this is not the time for the discussion. We need to rush to safety.' Tara telepathized.

While outside, for the first time, Dharma saw this new planet. It was very similar to Earth though it felt as if it had slightly lesser gravity because Dharma was running faster than he could on Earth, and the atmospheric pressure was slightly less. They were in some jungle which had huge trees and grass. After walking for some time, they rushed inside a cave, and Boro pressed some button to close the door of the cave. For an outsider, it would seem like a stone.

'Dharma also needs to change dress and guise.' Boro telepathized. 'Zoro, where is his new dress.'

Zoro handed over a stone type of material to Dharma.

'What is this?' Dharma was confused.

'Just do as I say.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'Take the red stone and touch it to your forehead.' Lady Tara then raised her forearm and shot a ray.

Dharma was draped in a red woollen toga draped over a tunic dress. Generally, he had seen in old movies that ancient people dressed like that.

'You are correct, Dharma. These were the dresses of ancient Romans.' Lady Tara continued. 'You are wearing this because now the part of this planet Mazol where we are going, you can call it a Roman city. Is it a coincidence or what? You will find the majority of males dressed there like this. This tunnel will take us there. It will not be long before our enemies find us, so we must change cities regularly. But on this planet, Mazol, you will find most of the dresses of ancient Earth are still in fashion. It is strange.' Lady Tara concluded.

'But how do you know about the ancient roman dresses or other ancient dresses of planet Earth. You said you are always here.' Dharma's question was raising some kind of suspicion.

'Haha, my brother, don't suspect me. I had read it in your mind when you were thinking about ancient civilizations of Earth.' Lady Tara smiled back.

'We don't have time for all this.' Boro telepathized. They all have now worn different dresses, mostly similar to what Dharma was wearing now. Lady Tara wore a woollen mantle over a simple long-sleeved voluminous garment.

'Zoro, where is the Kart.' Boro asked.

Dharma was confused about what is this 'Kart'.

'It is the car which will take us to the other side of this tunnel. This tunnel is approx. 145 km long, and you need a vehicle to cross it. You simply cannot walk this much. Right, Dharma.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'Agreed. In the meantime, you can tell me the story about the First Eritrean War.' Dharma again got curious.

'The Kart is here.' Zoro intervened in the conversation between Lady Tara and Dharma.

Dharma found Kart was like a passenger car on Earth, but it is triangular and has two kidney-shaped air intakes, an emblem having 'M' in a circle, and two double-round headlights. It can easily be mistaken to be an elegant and coveted SUV. But Kart was no match to Blackrock, which was one of the finest vehicles Dharma had ever seen. Blackrock's smooth journey was a joyride for Dharma.

'You are correct, my Lord.' The first time it seemed Zoro had read Dharma's mind. 'Blackrock is a limited edition vehicle which is not manufactured frequently. It was specially purchased by us from the Merkels. We have a few Merkel supporters who sometimes help us with such unique gifts. If providence would have it, you may visit the planet of Xor and other great places, but you would rarely find an all-terrain automatic self-driven vehicle which we call 'Autonoms'. These are the best business vehicles and are truly autonomous in all aspects. They can, on mental command, also be shifted to a tenement. So, if we have to go for a picnic Blackrock also can be converted into a tent. But Kart is not bad, either. It is fast. This distance of 145 km looks huge to you, right? But Kart will cover it in no time.'

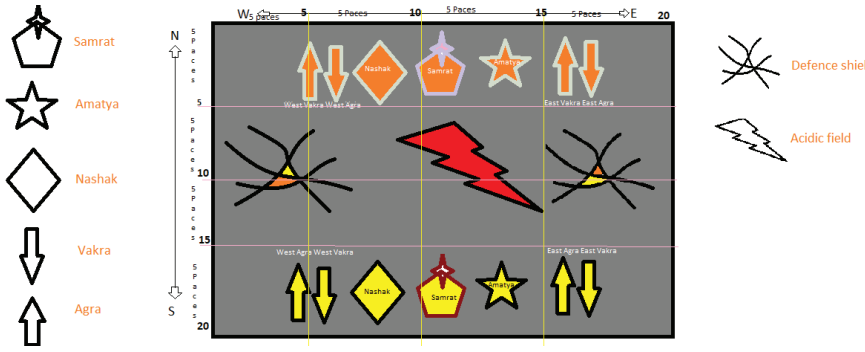
'Precisely thirty minutes as per Earth time.' Lady Tara telepathized. 'And in that much time, I will continue with our story. Already you have seen that Ralf had planned an armed mission to be sent to Eritrea. Around that time, the Nadus planet, unaware about how they were going to be the sufferers of collateral damage, were doing their daily chores.'

*Nothing Planet – Planet Nadus.*
*600 Earth years before Dharma had arrived in Muverse.*

Xorian believed that this planet was of no use to them, and they had unnecessarily spent time and energy terraforming it. Neither they got the kind of minerals or materials they presumed they would, nor did this planet fit in their scheme of expansion. They used this planet to throw the Mag and Magmu out of mother planet Xor and later to punish the prisoner of war, space pirates, robbers and other criminals, and these were thrown on to this planet to die. But they survived, and ultimately a civilization developed on this planet. The natives here were always hostile towards Xor and wanted to secede and live independently. Xorian didn't want to lose control over the planet, so they had always brutally curbed the rebellion. Nadusians, too, had resigned to the fate, and except few protests here and there, it was mostly peaceful.

Nothing Planet or Nadus was divided into five major regions, and one such region was Magath. The capital of Magath was Petal, where a big tournament was taking place where all the five regions were participating. The final was between Magath and Dhartal, the two relatively prosperous regions of this planet.

The game was called 'Cress.' The field was set. Orange and Yellow are the two sets of teams. A huge crowd thronged the northern and southern parts of the Roulette stadium. Large screens were present from where the crowd could watch the live telecast. Many drones were flying all across to capture the live footage.




Cress. A game played in Nadus since the times the Mag and Magmu were shoved here. They developed a camaraderie with the animal kind of Nadus, and this was their way of conducting war. Winner of Cress, generally by killing the King of the other side, was entitled to the booty. The entire city or state region was for him to take. Slowly it developed as a game. Now extremely popular over the entire planet.

There were seven players on each side, and the aim was to kill or dismount the 'Samrat' (King). The field is approx. 600 meters x 600 meters, within which each of the seven players on either side had to play. Samrat was in the middle sitting on a giant war elephant. Samrat possessed a sword, spear and shield. Next to him in a star-shaped area was Amatya standing on a four horses chariot with a crossbow and quiver full of various arrows (carbon arrows, poison-tipped arrows, fire arrows), sword, spear and mace. On the diamond-shaped square was Nashak, who bore powerful torches. Nashak was mounting a flying vulture and could shoot torches/flame shots from the air. He had incendiary rockets with gunpowder attached. These rocket torches could be shot at fierce speed, especially due to gravitational pull. Vakra and Agra were foot soldiers with a spear and shields. Vakra could move only backwards, and Agra could only move forward. Though both Agra and Vakra could move eastward and westward. Vakra possessed a huge shield that could be helpful in defending from attacks of the arrow, torches, swords, spears etc. Agra's shield was three fourth the size of Vakra.

Samrat had to order these troops. On the 'Defence shield' in the field, on the yellow portion, yellow team and orange portion, an orange team member can rest. However, at one time, one person could enjoy the shelter of a 'Defence shield'. The person inside Defence shield could not be harmed. However, Samrat can stand there only once for a max time of one

Pal, i.e. five Earth minutes. Others could stand there any number of times and for an unlimited time. But when any troop member was standing on the Defence shield, he couldn't take part in the game.

The Yellow Samrat had to play one move, and then the orange Samrat would play and likewise. A total of forty moves were allowed, and if in that any of the Samrat was not dead or dismounted, the match ended in a draw, and in that case, the two Samrats had to fight one on one until the other died or surrendered.

'But what is the acidic field. Seems it is covering the entire front of Orange players. The advantage to Yellow players.' Dharma intervened in the story that Tara was explaining and asked curiously.

'It is filled with highly corrosive acid. A small splash of the acid could cause severe harm. This is used tactically by teams. You will learn as we follow this game.' Lady Tara explained and went back to throw the visions of the past.

'The teams Magath and Dhartal are ready, and now is the time to decide who will be playing from which side of the field. Samrats of both teams come here for arm wrestling. The winner will decide who will take which side of the field.' Announced the commentator.

'You will be finished today, Sajjan', said Kalia, the Samrat of Dhartal.

'That time will tell. I have not seen in the past many years Dhartal ever winning a match of Cress against the mighty Magath, and history will repeat itself today.' Sajjan roared loudly. The stadium was filled with full cheers. This was Magath; people came in large numbers to support their team against the archrivals.

'Let's start the game. Hope both the Samrats are ready.' Said the umpire.

And with that, both Samrats, Sajjan and Kalia came to the arm-wrestling pod and started to arm wrestle. Sajjan was a well-built Mag, though with evolution, they look similar to large-size humans, and it seems he would be a tough competitor to defeat in arm wrestling. But Kalia was shrewd; he had long been preparing for this moment. Kalia was also a Mag shorter in height than Sajjan and lesser in built and was aware of the fact that in

strength, Sajjan was stronger than him. Kalia also knew that whoever took the Orange place had a strategic disadvantage as the larger part of the acidic field covered the area, and it would become difficult to manoeuvre. It was important to win this arm wrestling.

'Start!!!' shouted the umpire.

There were big applause and cheers for Magath. In no time, Sajjan was almost close to winning as the hand of Kalia was almost at the end of the pod. If it touches the pod, Sajjan be declared the winner. Kalia was struggling to somehow delay the apparent victory of Sajjan.

'You have applied some sort of sand on your hand.' Sajjan told Kalia while wrestling. 'Do you think this is going to help you in any way?' Sajjan was almost about to put Kalia's arm to the end of Pod.

Kalia was not responding to Sajjan but concentrating on ensuring he didn't lose. But the crowd was certain that at any moment, Sajjan would win. The crowd was shouting his name. The match was telecasted all over the Nadus planet and even in the Xorian Empire (with necessary lags).

But suddenly, Sajjan realized intense pain in his arm. He didn't understand why his arm was suddenly getting numb. Was it the sand that Kalia had applied, but how some sand can cause such pain and numbness. But Sajjan continued to exert pressure to ensure Kalia lost. However, in no time, his hand started disobeying the orders of his brain. The numbness had set in. His hand was not taking any command from his brain.

Kalia overturned the game. He, in one sudden move, not only undone the lead of Sajjan but, in a big jolt, put Sajjan's hand down on the pod with such force that the bone broke. The crowd suddenly became silent.

'Today, it is impossible to defeat me, Sajjan. Now go with your broken hand and wait for your death.' Kalia finally responded to Sajjan.

'Kalia has won the arm wrestling; thus, he will decide which field he chooses.' Umpire said.

'Yellow for Dhartal and Orange for Magath.' Kalia roared.

Sajjan was in complete shock at this loss. He didn't understand how he had lost. What was that sudden numbness? Sajjan's teammate came near him.

'What happened, Sajjan? You were winning that. What was that sudden moment that you lost control over your arm? We all saw that.' Rajan, the Amatya of the Magath team, said gingerly.

'I don't know. See this sand on my right arm. This is what Kalia applied to his hand. While doing the arm wrestling, this was rubbed into my arm.

It was not having any impact on Kalia, but slowly it numbed my hand. I lost control over my right arm during the fight.'

'Let me examine.' Thorson said. He was the team medical superintendent. 'This sand is not normal. It is different. I can't tell right now. But I have to send it for examination. We will lodge a formal protest against this illegal practice.' Thorson continued.

'Those things are for later. Right now, we have to concentrate on the game. We have to win it.' Sajjan said.

'Let's take our positions.' Sajjan continued. Thorson had applied the necessary bandages to fix the broken bone temporarily. Also gave some medicines to Sajjan to bear the pain.

'But with your one arm gone and you in pain, do you think you can manage the show.' Rajan said.

'Yes. This is not a game. It is a war. We must be ready for anything and everything.' Sajjan said. He continued pointing towards the large crowd cheering in the vast stadium, 'you see, the entire Magath crowd has gone silent; we cannot be letting their hopes go down the drain. We have to play and win.' Sajjan was determined. This sudden treachery by Kalia had made him more resolute.

'You are fantastic. What have you done?' Klan was very excited. He was the Amatya of Dhartal.

'Nothing special.' Kalia was calm as he was now ready to annihilate the Magath's pride once and forever.

'Still, tell how it happened. You were losing, and suddenly at the last moment, you, with just one jolt, turned the tables. I can't control my excitement. Please tell how it happened.' Klan can't control his excitement. He was behaving as if they had won the game and Sajjan was killed.

'Calm, Klan. You remember when we practised, I was always in pain due to the sand I used to apply on my hands.' Kalia said.

'Yes, I do.'

'This is the sand mixed with a poison which numbs your senses. Since I was applying it regularly, my body developed resistance, but since Sajjan had never had the experience before, his body just couldn't take it. His arm became numb, and I used that opportunity to defeat him.' Kalia calmly explained.

'You are the fantastic boss. But the medical superintendent will find out about it.' Klan was concerned.

'No, this poison disappears after some time. So by the time our match is over and their medical superintendent goes for testing, he will find nothing.' Kalia said.

'No one can match your brilliance Kalia. I am sure we are going to win this and show Magath on Magath's land that they should not even think of matching Dhartal's brilliance. For so many years, we have been losing, and this ignominy was pinching us all, but now we will show that we are the best in Nadus.' Klan said.

'Yes. This game, Cress, is an old game of our planet. This was developed here by the native tribe of this planet. It has become a culture of Nadus. It is in our DNA. Despite so much advancement, it is played on the mammoth, cart horses, and vultures with bow and arrow because no one wants to tinker with its format. We can use motor vehicles or flying drones, but we don't; why – because this is not a game, it is a phenomenon, it is a pride for the people of Nadus, and we will not allow anyone to crush our pride. Magathians will today pay the price of humiliating us for so long,' Kalia said devilishly.

Let the game begin. Umpire shouted.

'My first move is West Agra two paces forward.' Kalia shouted. As he won the arm wrestle, he got the yellow field and was the one to move first. Agra and Vakra can only move at max two paces (six meters) in one move, whereas all other pieces can move a maximum of five paces (thirty meters) in one move. Nashak can fly up to a maximum of five paces, along with moving forward or backwards.

'He is stupid. We should start with our strong points. What do you suggest?' Sajjan asked Rajan.

'I feel you are right. Let's start with Nashak.' Rajan responded.

'Nashak, fly up five paces.' Sajan shouted.

The person on a giant vulture with torches flew up thirty meters.

'He has lost his hand as well as his mind. Nashak, with that up, cannot aim properly on anything.' Kalia laughed and said to Klan.

'That's true. But remember one thing we have to ensure that our Agra and Vakra are near you. They have a shield, and later if the Amatya from the other side reaches here, we need the protection.' Klan said.

'My second move West Agra two paces towards the east.' Kalia shouted.

'Nashak, five paces forward.' Sajjan shouted.

'My third move. West Agra, continue two paces towards the east.' Kalia shouted.

'Nashak, five paces forward.' Sajjan commanded.

'With their Nashak now near the shelter and the acidic area, they have blocked our movement. Is it a plan to choke the attacking area?' Klan looked concerned, trying to understand the strategy of the other side.

'You worry too much, Klan. We will send you, the Amatya, to kill this Nashak. But before that, first thing first. Security of Samrat.' Kalia retorted to Klan. 'My fourth move is West Agra, two paces towards the east.' Kalia said.

'Now I will surprise this, Kalia. I will myself move forward but just one pace.' Sajjan told Rajan.

'But why. I didn't understand.' Rajan said.

'See, he is fortifying himself, but my plan is to attack straight. You see, slowly, you will find Kalia on our side of the field, and I want to kill him myself. Also, this will distract his attention. He will not know what my plans are.' Sajjan explained. 'Samrat! one pace forward.' Shouted Sajjan.

'I can't stop laughing. This stupid Sajjan has lost his mind. I didn't know that poison works so quickly on the mind also.' Kalia said laughingly.

'My fifth move. West Agra, continue two paces towards the east.' Kalia shouted.

With this, now the West Agra had travelled a distance of about six paces, and now he was standing in front of Samrat Kalia. Any attack on Samrat can be defended by this Agra now.

'Good, Kalia. Now we need to call the other Agra too so that your defence is complete before we can attack.' Klan said.

'Yes Klan.' Kalia said.

'You know, Rajan, what you have to do. I know it is suicidal, but we have to take this risk.' Sajjan said to Rajan.

'Don't worry, we have practised this numerous times; I am totally ready. This tactical move will confuse our rivals. You command my sire.' Rajan said.

'Amatya, five paces forward.' Sajjan shouted.

'What is this there Amatya is heading towards the Acidic field. He can never cross it. This is a tactical blunder.' Klan said.

'You don't worry about their Amatya. He is destined to die in that acidic field. But first thing first, my defence.' Kalia said. 'My sixth move East Agra two paces forward.' Kalia shouted. Move 6.

'Amatya, five paces forward.' Sajjan shouted.

'My seventh move East Agra two paces towards west.' Kalia shouted.

'Amatya, two paces towards the east.' Sajjan said.

'You see, the Amatya from the other side is going towards the narrow side of the acidic field. Either they will waste two moves in just moving Amatya to the right place between the acidic field and the shelter dome, and Amatya will move from that place and try to attack. But it will take quite a number of moves. Still, if you say let us send this East Agra there to fight their Amatya.' Klan said.

'What? Have you lost your mind, Klan?' Kalia was disturbed at such suggestions. 'A plebian Agra cannot withstand Amatya. More so, I need to complete my defence first. I am not stupid like Sajjan, who himself is moving out in the field. He wants to be hunted with the arrows of my Amatya. I am not that stupid.' Kalia was clear about his strategy.

'My eighth move East Agra two paces towards west.' Kalia ordered.

'Samrat, one pace forward.' Sajjan said.

'Hahaha. Really he is stupid to the core. In the field coming out. Good, we can kill him quick and finish this non-sensical drama where our victory is pre-destined.' Kalia told Klan, who was looking a bit uncertain about these seeming illogical moves from Sajjan. Maybe it is due to the poison. Klan thought.

'My ninth move East Agra two paces towards west.' Kalia shouted. With this, now both the Agras were in front of Samrat Kalia so that in case the Amatya started attacking the Samrat, these Agras could defend with their shield. Though Samrat was on an elephant still, the Amatya on his chariot could attack the elephant's leg or trunk. So better if it is protected by the Agras. Samrat Kalia can defend on top with his shield against any attack of arrows or spears by the Amatya.

'Amatya, five paces forward'. Sajjan said.

'I can't believe what I am seeing.' Klan exclaimed.

The Amatya Rajan, instead of wasting any move, was crossing the narrowest portion of the acidic field. The acid can damage the chariot, and then for Amatya Rajan to go back would be difficult. This means Rajan had decided to move with limited ability because now, if he moved too much up, down or east-west, his chariot would break. This meant he had decided not to go back and stay and attack with limited mobility; otherwise, he would not have decided to cross the acidic field with a chariot, even if it was from the narrowest side. Thought Klan. But before Klan could say anything to Kalia, Kalia said, 'Such stupid heroics. Now it is good that this Rajan, because of his stupid hastiness, has crossed the

acidic field with the chariot. He cannot move much now, and we will kill him here.'

'My tenth move, Amatya, five paces forward.' Shouted Kalia. Go Klan and finish their stupid Samrat Sajjan. The Amatya Rajan is trapped here, and now my Amatya will go and kill the Samrat there.

'Samrat 1 pace forward.' Sajjan said.

'Haha. Seeing that my Amatya is marching towards him to kill him, he has lost his mind. Pacing up and down in the field. Soon his misery will end. I know for sure he cannot think of any move.' Kalia laughed and shouted.

'I know, my great Samrat, you are doing this for me. You want this stupid Kalia to believe that I have taken steps in haste, but in fact, you are giving time to me to recover my chariot, and also, you want this rival Amatya to be away. Your tactics are working perfectly.' Rajan said to himself.

'My eleventh move, Amatya, five paces towards west.' Kalia shouted. With this, Amatya Klan is positioned to march towards the other side from the west flank between the acidic field and shelter dome. There was a lot of free space available. Though it seemed both Kalia and Klan were oblivious to the fact that Nashak of Magath was quietly flying over that spot. Samrat Sajjan had already, in initial moves, positioned the Nashak there.

'Samrat 1 pace forward.' Sajjan said.

'He totally is of no use. What a waste of final.' Kalia shouted. 'Is this the Magath Samrat, who doesn't know how to strategize?' Kalia shouted towards the crowd who was cheering Magath.

'Why our Samrat Sajjan is moving forward in the field. He also let our Amatya cross the acidic field, which was a blunder.' One person from the crowd said.

'Wait and watch. Our Sajjan is great tactician.' Another person in the crowd said.

'I have seen how he lost that arm wrestling. At the last moment, when he was about to win, Kalia turned the table.' The first person in the crowd said. 'And this time, it seems that this Amatya Klan is going to cruise through to the other side and kill this Samrat Sajjan who is purposelessly just pacing one step up on his elephant.' He continued.

'My twelfth move is Amatya five paces towards West.' Kalia said. With this, now Amatya was just 5 paces away from the middle of the acidic field and shelter dome. In the next move, this Amatya Klan would be placed in

the west flank, attacking place at the Shelter Dome and Acidic field. And in one more move of five paces, Amatya Klan would be near Samrat Sajjan.

Kalia was happy that soon he would order his Amatya to attack Sajjan and probably kill him in the first attack.

'Samrat, one pace forward.' Sajjan shouted. With this, Sajjan moved five paces, which means he was near the thicker side of the acidic field.

'I can't watch it anymore. I am leaving.' The Magath supporter in the crowd was about to leave.

'Sajjan has lost it. We will kick him out if he survives this.' Narayan, the Coach and Chief Selector for the team, were distraught. He was also the Minister for Sports in Magath and was very close to the elected leader President Nodi.

'Don't worry. He is a master tactician. I can see and understand his game.' President Nodi consoled Narayan. They both were watching the game from the VIP cabin.

'I don't see any tactics here.' Narayan responded.

'Because you don't have a vision, Narayan. See, the Magath's Amatya is within striking distance of the Samrat Kalia. Only two Agras there to defend. But knowing Rajan, his bows will never miss the target, so that defence is a weak defence. Nashak is very well placed in the beginning from the most convenient west flank, where Kalia would have attacked. Because Nashak was placed so early, Kalia has almost forgotten about him. And, to confuse Kalia, Samrat Sajjan is moving only one pace at a time forward. If Samrat Sajjan wanted, he could have moved five paces forward in one go. But he doesn't want to leave his place. He is waiting for Kalia to come there and get killed. You see, ultimately, Kalia would have to run and go near Samrat Sajjan.' Nodi seemed to have understood the tactic clearly.

'It is remarkable. Maybe that's why you are the President of this country, and I am not.' Narayan said.

'But this should come from you. You are the sports minister.' Laughed Nodi.

'My thirteenth move is Amatya five paces forward.' Kalia ecstatically said. Because now, in the next move, Amatya Klan would be stationed near Samrat Sajjan, and he will attack Sajjan and kill him. Sajjan doesn't even have his Agra's to defend him.

'Now see the fun.' Nodi retorted, looking at Narayan.

'Nashak attack Amatya. Burn him with torches.' Sajjan shouted. As per the rules, when a player was asked to attack in a move, he was free

to attack, and another person who was attacked could defend with a shield or, if he has Agra and Vakra near him, take their help. But neither the attacker nor the defender can move a bit. Amatya can continue to attack for one Pal (five Earth minutes), but others can only attack for ½ Pal (2 ½ Earth minutes), after which the move ends.

'What? I almost forgot about this Nashak. He was stationed there.' Kalia was surprised and shocked.

'I wished I could attack him with my bows, but for this ½ Pal (2 ½ minutes), I have to safeguard from this fire coming from the top of me.' Klan thought.

Kalia, in his hurry to reach Sajjan, forgot and brought his Amatya Klan just beneath the Nashak of Magath, who mercilessly was singing Klan, and it was like hell-fury unleashed on Klan.

But to the escape of Klan, the siren blew, indicating the 2½ minutes were over, and Nashak could not throw any fire or attack further till Magath's next move. Klan was brutally injured. His armour prevented fatal blows, but still, he was bleeding, and his burnt skin was paining badly.

'I will take revenge, Sajjan. These dirty tactics you are using.' Kalia roared angrily. This attack of Nashak on the Amatya Klan had grieved him much. 'My fourteenth move is Amatya Klan attack Nashak for one Pal (five Earth minutes).' Kalia shouted.

Klan started shooting arrows at Nashak. But given that Nashak was thirty meters above, the arrows were either getting deflected due to wind, some were hitting the vulture few were getting defended by the Nashak through his shield. Klan was a good archer, and he managed to damage the vulture a bit and hit Nashak with a few arrows. But their intensity was not heavy. Thus, Nashak was neither injured fatally nor was the vulture affected much to fall below.

'You have seen your Amatya's attack Kalia. Now you again witness my wounded Nashak's revenge.' Shouted Sajan. 'My fourteenth move is Nashak attack Amatya Klan.' Sajjan ordered.

This time Nashak started hitting Amatya badly with fireballs and torches. Amatya couldn't withstand this 2½ minutes of fire rain. Kalia saw that Amatya was in a big plight. His attacks were barely reaching the height of thirty meters, but Nashak's torches were dropping like bullets.

'My fifteenth move is Nashak up five paces.' Kalia thought of sending his Nashak to fight the Nashak of Magath.

'I was waiting for this movement. When even Nashak leaves Samrat Kalia, we can build an attack from the east flank on Kalia.' Amatya Rajan thought.

'Amatya, three paces towards the west.' Shouted Samrat Sajjan. With this move, Amatya was near the Samrat Kalia and the two Agras. In the next move, Amatya could start attacking Samrat Kalia. Kalia was now in imminent danger.

'You don't worry about me. Ask our Nashak to attack Amatya Rajan. You don't send him here.' Amatya Klan shouted.

'No Klan. You are almost destroyed because if that Nashak of Magath attacks you once more, we will lose you. It is better I send our Nashak to your rescue. He will fight with the Nashak of Magath. For me, there are Agras. I have already defended myself.' Kalia shouted.

'My sixteenth move is Nashak five paces forward', Kalia shouted.

The crowd of Magath, who hitherto was silent on the seemingly stupid moves of Sajjan, suddenly started shouting and rooting for Magath. It seemed a new energy had swept into the crowd.

'See Narayan. This is known as a pure tactic. Kalia is now left with no option. He is facing imminent danger in the face of Amatya Rajan, who now doesn't need to move. So even his crossing the acidic field with the chariot is not a disadvantage. Plus, the Amatya of Dhartal is trapped. He can neither go and attack Samrat Sajjan nor can he defend his own Samrat Kalia.' Nodi said in a praising tone.

'I agree, sir. I couldn't see this tactical game.' Narayan conceded defeat.

'Amatya attack Samrat Kalia.' Sajjan roared.

It was a brutal attack. Amatya Rajan started showering the arrows untiringly, one after the other. Samrat Kalia and his two Agras were within striking distance. The attack was on Samrat Kalia. The arrows were hitting the elephant, who was crying in pain. Kalia was defending through his shield. Even the foot soldiers Agras tried to defend themselves, but it was difficult. Somehow the five minutes of misery got over, and Kalia had a sigh of relief.

'My seventeenth move is Vakra two paces backwards.' Kalia said. Vakras only move backwards, and they have big shields that are almost ten feet tall. Their main purpose is to defend the Samrat because their shield is used to defend against Amatya's attack. They have to be used strategically because though they can provide long shields, they move backwards, which,

at times, is forgotten by players, which causes them to lose the advantage of the shield of Vakras.

'Haha. You have mentally already conceded defeat.' Shouted Sajjan from a distance. 'You already have two Agras, but you are too scared of Amatya Rajan that you want both your Vakras also to be near you to shield you from the attack of Amatya Rajan. But that is too late. By the time your Vakras come near you, you will be a dead man.' Sajjan keeps on shouting to ensure everyone listens.

'Amatya attack Samrat Kalia.' Sajjan shouted.

Amatya Rajan started the brutal attack with arrows again. This time Amatya Rajan, after showering lots of arrows, took one large spear and aimed at one eye of the elephant of Samrat Kalia and shot. The spear pierced the eye of the elephant, who cried in pain.

Kalia was now perplexed. He didn't know what to do. These Vakras will only move two paces at a time. His elephant could throw him on the ground at any moment, which was considered surrender, and Sajjan would win. I need to call my Amatya back. Thought Kalia.

'My eighteenth move is Amatya five paces backwards.' Shouted Kalia

'Oh stupid Kalia, by the time even your Amatya comes, you will be a dead man. He is ten paces away from you; it will take two moves.' Laughed Amatya Rajan.

'Amatya Rajan attack Samrat Kalia.' Sajjan cried loudly.

Another rain of arrows started flowing towards Kalia. Who by now had lost everything. He didn't know what to do or how to escape. His Agras, despite their shield, were brutally injured. The rain of arrows by Rajan had pierced them. They could barely stand and could fall at any moment.

'What should I do. Amatya will take time to come, and I don't think I can take these attacks anymore.' Kalia thought.

Rajan shot another spear towards the elephant's second eye. This time, however, Kalia, in a desperate manner, fixed his leg in the seat tied on mammoth's back or howdah and acrobatically jumped head down and ensured that the spear hit the shield. Now Kalia was hanging with his leg fixed to the elephant's howdah.

Rajan thought it an opportune time to hit Kalia with arrows. Rajan started attacking Kalia with arrows. However, Kalia defended the arrows on his head with the shield he had, but many arrows pierced his legs and many he took on his back. But to his pleasant surprise, the five minutes were over. Slowly somehow, Kalia managed to get back to the howdah.

'I cannot take another attack of Amatya Rajan. By the time my Amatya comes, it will be too late. Let me run away from here.' Thought Kalia.

'My Nineteenth move is Samrat five paces towards west.' Kalia shouted.

'At least this Rajan cannot chase me. His chariot is broken.' Kalia thought.

'Amatya Rajan, attack Agra and kill.' Sajjan ordered.

Rajan started attacking the Agra, and the West Agra got killed in less than a minute. The other Agra was already injured badly. But he still was holding the shield high. So as to ensure that he could safeguard his Samrat, whatever little he could.

Kalia was shocked. This means Rajan was now aiming at this running Samrat. With pair of Agra broken, Samrat Kalia was defenceless. He had to run away from this Amatya Rajan.

'My twentieth move is five paces forward.' Kalia shouted. He wanted to run away from Rajan.

But Kalia didn't realize that he was now at the same place where he was within the firing range of Nashak of Magath, who was attacking the Amatya Klan.

'Nashak attack Samarat Kalia.' Sajjan shouted.

Nashak of Magath started throwing torches and fireballs from the sky at Samrat Kalia. Samrat Kalia was severely injured, and this fire also burnt his seat. He is now only holding the ropes, and at any moment, he could fall from the elephant.

'I have to run away from this Nashak too.' Kalia thought.

'My twenty-first move is Samrat five paces towards West.' Kalia shouted. Now Kalia was near the shelter dome.

'Amatya attack East Agra of Dhartal and kill.' Sajjan shouted.

Amatya Rajan attacked the second foot soldier and killed him within a minute.

This shocked Kalia. Though he was far away from Amatya Rajan, now both his foot soldiers whom he called in initial moves to defend him were dead. It seemed Kalia had failed miserably in the tactic.

'Samrat Kalia to shelter home for ½ Pal. This is my next move.' Kalia shouted.

He needed this break. He came down from his elephant. He got a new elephant with proper mounts. His injuries were tended to. But as per the rule, he has to come out within ½ Pal (2 ½ Earth minutes). And it just flew away.

'Nashak five paces towards west.' Sajjan shouted.

'Oh my god, this Nashak is now again over my head. He is going to throw fireballs again at my elephant and me. I have to run away.' Kalia was now only thinking about his own life. He was totally off the track now and had lost complete control of the game.

'Kalia, don't worry. Keep your spirits. I am there; we will kill these cowards who can only attack and kill poor Agras.' Amatya Klan shouted.

'Amatya Klan, five paces forward is my twenty-third move.' Kalia shouted. Klan has given him comfort.

'Amatya, five paces towards West.' Sajjan shouted.

This was a blunder. The first unforced error of Sajjan may be the biggest one. Because the chariot of Amatya Rajan was damaged, and if he moved five paces west which was thirty meters, his chariot could break, and if that happened, Rajan would be out of the game. If the mounted players, like those on an elephant or on a chariot or on a vulture, fell down from their mount, then they were considered dead.

But Rajan somehow made the journey.

Here Amatya Klan was near his Samrat and was ready to attack the Nashak of Magath, who could have attacked Samrat Kalia in the previous move, but somehow due to a tactical mistake, Sajjan had not done so.

'Amatya Klan attack Nashak of Magath, this is my twenty-fourth move,' shouted Kalia. Who, somehow, was gaining some confidence in his play now.

Amatya Klan attacked Nashak with the full blow, but given the distance, it could only hit the vulture. But these arrows, which were hitting the vulture, were causing a lot of pain and discomfort to the vulture, and anytime either the vulture could lie dead or simply run away from the field. In either case, Nashak would be out of the game.

'Nashak attack Samrat Kalia' shouted Sajjan. 'There is no sense attacking the Amatya; it is better to attack Samrat Kalia, who is badly wounded.' Thought Sajjan.

But now Kalia had a new elephant who was not injured and also had a new shield. Though few fireballs injured the elephant as Samrat Kalia was a little far from Nashak majority of fireballs missed their target. Kalia withstood the attack.

'Amatya Klan, attack Nashak, and if possible, kill him; this is my twenty-fifth move.' Kalia shouted. He was gaining confidence now. Seemed that

Sajjan also was losing the plot. Sajjan was almost close to winning this championship, but Kalia had gained confidence at the right moment.

It didn't take long. The vulture had taken many blows, and this time just two arrows, and the vulture dropped dead along with that Nashak of Magath was out of the game. Owing this fall, he was also badly injured.

This perturbed Sajjan, and he committed another error.

'Amatya Rajan take revenge from Amatya Klan attack him.' Sajjan shouted. 'My next move is Amatya Rajan, five paces west.' Sajjan declared.

But as the chariot was not in a position to move an inch now, this movement broke the chariot, and Rajan fell on the ground and thus was out of the game. Sajjan had lost both important players in a stroke of two moves; Nashak and Amatya of Magath were now out.

'See Sajjan, both your support gone. Now I am going to wipe you out.' Kalia shouted.

The crowd was silent. How Sajjan, who had shown such a great tactical play, had committed such blunders, and now he had neither Nashak nor Amatya, whereas their rivals had both.

'Samrat, five paces forward.' Kalia shouted. 'This is my twenty-sixth move.' Kalia was exuberant.

'Samrat, five paces towards West.' Sajjan shouted. With this, both of them were near each other.

'Come, if you are a true player, let's fight it out. I challenge you; I will kill you in this field. You have won the arm wrestling by fraud. My one arm still is not completely recovered from numbness. But I can still defeat you. I will fight with my left hand and kill you, Kalia.' Sajjan roared.

'Don't listen to him. We have material superiority. We have many moves left. It is only twenty-six moves that are over; we have another fourteen moves. You give the order to Nashak and me, and we both will cover this Samrat Sajjan and kill him. You don't have to fight him one on one.' Amatya Klan suggested.

'No Klan. Enough of this strategy; I am going to kill this Sajjan with my hand.' Kalia responded.

'Sajjan's right hand is numb due to the poison; he will fight with his left hand; how difficult it would be for me to kill him. The left hand is not his natural hand.' Kalia shouted. He forgot that others could hear him. There was an eerie silence in the crowd. They could not believe Kalia had poisoned Sajjan. Kalia himself was shocked by what he had said.

Though without wasting any time, he shouted his next move, 'Samrat Kalia, attack Samrat Sajjan. This is my twenty-seventh and last move, hopefully.' Kalia roared and took a spear, and threw it at Sajjan. Samrat Kalia got five minutes to attack, and Samrat Sajjan had to defend through shield only.

Kalia started attacking with his spear. Sajjan had the shield in his left hand. Kalia can visibly see Sajjan cannot defend himself that properly. Kalia hit the leg of Sajjan with a spear. Kalia again hit the left hand of Sajjan. Sajjan was bleeding profusely. In the next attack, the shield of Sajjan fell down. Now it was Sajjan alone, defenceless. Kalia took the spear and was about to pierce it through Sajjan when the bell rang. The five minutes of Kalia's move were over.

'God saved you, Sajjan, in this move. But what will happen next? You don't have any shield now, and your left hand is too injured to be of any rescue to you.' Kalia laughed.

'But before your move, it is my move Kalia.' Sajjan shouted.

'So are you going to kill me in this move? I have a shield, and both my hands are working fine. Unlike you, who has both hands injured and no shield. I will withstand your attack, and then I will attack you.' Kalia said.

'My last move,' Samrat shouted. 'Samrat Sajjan to attack Samrat Kalia and kill him.'

The audience started rooting for Sajjan. They all realized Kalia had played some trick. The noise of 'Kill Kalia' thundered the place.

Samrat got enormous energy due to the support. He took the spear in his left hand, which was profusely bleeding. Kalia was laughing. He did not even hold his shield properly because he did not believe Samrat Sajjan could lift the spear. 'Do you think this imbecile can kill me?' Kalia mocked the crowd. He was not paying any attention to Sajjan, who struggled to pick a spear from his bleeding left hand.

But suddenly, before Kalia could realize it, Sajjan lifted the spear from his right hand and threw it at him. The spear pierced Kalia's torso. Before Kalia could realize it, Sajjan took another spear from his right hand and threw it at Kalia, which pierced Kalia's heart.

'Nooo, Samrat Kalia.' Amatya Klan shouted in exasperation.

'Yes, my right hand is not numb. You stupid person, the poison effect has worn off. I just wanted a confession from you that you have poisoned me and wanted to kill you with treachery to answer your treachery.' Sajjan spoke as his eyes were pitched red.

'You fraudster …' Kalia's last words. He died immediately.

The crowd applauded the feat of Samrat Sajjan.

And Kalia, who had Amatya and Nashak with him, lost the battle and his life.

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## CHAPTER 11

# The First Eritrean War – Precursor

A big thud stopped the flow of the story. 'What happened?' asked Dharma.

'We have reached our destination. You both, brother and sister, were so engrossed in the telepathic storytelling that you didn't realize we had reached the other side of the tunnel. Therefore, I shut the automatic doors, manually of this car.' Boro telepathized in an irritated tone.

'Oh. So sorry, Professor Boro. I was just visualizing the strange game Cress, which was played on Nothing Planet.' Dharma said.

'It is Nadus.' Boro immediately shouted.

'Xorian call it Nothing planet to demean its status, but we respect all, and therefore we call it Nadus, which is the real name of that planet.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'My bad then.' Dharma apologized.

'But how is this Nadus relevant to us.' Dharma asked.

'It is very relevant. You will know about it shortly. But before I can tell you about the adventure of Ralf to the planet Eritrea which has 'Antium' in abundance, and the role of Nadus in that, we better go to the safe house.' Lady Tara telepathized.

'Ok, *Didi*.' Dharma addressed Lady Tara for the first time since they had met in such an affectionate tone.

'I know *Didi* means elder sister. But it looks so nice to hear *Didi* from you. My charming younger brother.' Lady Tara was emotional.

'Let's move ahead.' Professor Boro was visibly angry.

'We have to walk almost a kilometre (Earth standard), and then we will reach our safe house.' Boro informed.

Dharma, Zoro, Tara, Laura and Boro started walking. Laura also had regained her senses, and while Tara was telling the story to Dharma about

Nadus, Laura was told about Dharma. This city where they were now looked like an ancient European city. Dharma could see there were small allays, buildings had an ancient look, it nowhere appeared as a modern city of a great empire as the people near him were trying to boast.

'True Dharma. This city is called Haran.' Lady Tara had read Dharma's thoughts. She continued, 'This is an old city with old customs. But people here are happy. And one more thing, we are on planet Mazol. It is different from mighty Xorians or Thyzer or Merkels. You will learn about this planet slowly. But what you will find fascinating here is that it is a potpourri of different races and types of people, and the liberal environment here allows many cultures to co-exist and grow peacefully.'

Dharma was amazed by the beauty of the surroundings. It was as if he had time travelled and reached the ancient era. He had seen such scenes in movies of yesteryears. They all were walking steadily. Dharma knew why they were wearing these costumes, cause from a distance, no one could filter them out from the others in the mildly crowded street.

Soon they reached a building. It was a hexagonal palace. They were walking through the gravel path shadowed by the trees and branches intertwined overhead. The sun was at its peak, and the palace was sloped down from these woods.

'We have reached our destination.' Boro announced ecstatically.

'I will arrange your rooms, my lord and my lady.' Zoro said while they all entered the building.

The interior was smooth, with a stone floor and rectangular cushion divans. The palace seemed to have a large galley. Dharma made himself comfortable over a chair, and Tara sat near him over another cushioned settee.

'Mazol has a very interesting feel. I don't know why I feel so much connected to this place.' Dharma said.

'You belong with here, my brother. You will learn slowly that this planet is where you must make the base and have to take on the mighty empire.' Lady Tara telepathized to Dharma.

'I am eager to know about the Eritrean war.' Dharma responded.

Tara closed her eyes, and so did Dharma. Dharma could now see the visions of the story as Tara was revealing.

'You are under arrest, President Nodi.' The marshal, who was of Ausulvanian origin, firmly said. He belonged to the esteemed Nonpareil Soldiery's Civilian Control Division 4. The main job of their division was to ensure that terraformed planets didn't engage in any rebellion towards mother planet Xor.

'But what is my offence. There aint any violation of the Sovereign Code,' Nodi protested.

'We have banned the game of Cress, and you being the head of state, are encouraging this monstrous game. And today, it had taken an IP-2 life. You are to be blamed for this.' The marshal spoke with contempt.

'What foolhardy argument is this? Participating in the Cress game can never be a violation of the Sovereign Code. You have only limited jurisdiction under that code. And for your information, the Cress game is not banned. The notification issued by the executive body is merely advisory and cannot be used to cross your jurisdiction. Mind you, I am the popularly elected leader of the entire people of Magath, which is one of the most prosperous nation-states on this planet. An alien like you cannot dictate the terms here.'

Before anyone could say anything, the marshal raised his baton and shot a lethal ray which immediately stunned Nodi, who fell down, and the assistant droids shoved him in a small chest. The people in the stadium were shocked. It was full of Magathian crowd. They saw this alien treating their beloved leader like a street offender, making him unconscious and carrying him in a chest. This behaviour may suit hardened criminals or wild animals. A head of state was the pride of the nation. Such behaviour caused huge anger in the crowd. Before the marshal and his assistant robots could understand anything, they encountered a huge mob attack. The marshal was pounded to pieces, and the robots, too, were destroyed beyond recompense. In many years it was the first time that a marshal of Nonpareil Soldiery was killed in such a brutal manner.

The few Dhartals in the crowd, too, supported the Magathian in this lynching. Though in the match, they had just lost their favourite skipper. Still, when it came to the alien rule, they were united. The atrocities of the alien rule had to end, and it was a bigger cause. Nodi was even respected by the Dhartals for his leadership.

Before the crowd could understand anything, a barrage of droids entered the stadium and started shooting everyone with lethal gamma rays. This was the automatic protocol. Once the marshal and the droids were in

danger, an SOS was auto-sent to the patrolling droids. Killing a marshal of Nonpareil Soldiery was a crime which maybe was of one of the highest order. Many Magathian and Dhartals, including the small toddlers, were killed by this lethal array of gamma rays.

'But if Cress was banned, how such a tournament was taking place.' Dharma was confused. He was now sitting in a comfortable room which reminded him of his Earth days. There was a sofa set like it used to be on Earth. Tara, Laura and Zoro were there. Boro was in some other room.

'Well, it was never banned. There was a group in Acrimea in Xor which was against killing of any sort. When it came to knowing that Cress is a game where bloodshed happens, they protested. However, Cress was a game which dates back even Xorian arrival on this planet, and it is a religion in this place. Therefore, the Xorian administrators issued an advisory to ban this game but left it to local administrators.'

'I understood. Ralf wants to draw unnecessary attention to the planet Nadus of its citizenry. Therefore, he needed to create such kind of mess so that he could create a scenario that he should be voted back to power.'

'You are right to an extent. You are thinking again from an Earth perspective. But politics is politics everywhere, and you are guessing in the right direction. Ralf had to create some large stir so that he could convince everyone of another term. He had not taken approval before embarking on a huge mission for Eritrea. The biggest problem was there were few Savitra65 ships, and sending four such important ships on such a mission where they could be lost forever in the maze of a wormhole was a big risk. What if the mission failed? Ralf had not taken the necessary approvals of the Governing Council, which was a violation. Virtually the Governing Council had the right to recover the full loss from the personal estate of Ralf, plus the public humiliation. Also, the Merkels would come to know about Eritrea. These were the complications which could only be handled if Ralf got another term. Because even if the mission failed, Ralf could erase the records in the system and never get caught. If the mission was successful, Ralf would become a great leader. Though Ralf was sure about the success of the mission, in any case, he didn't want to take a chance.'

'Understood, so Ralf had to do something so grave and create such situations that people treat him as a hero and to end some kind of rebellion, give him another term.'

'Rightly said. But to create such a situation was not easy, and Ralf knew that. He had to play his cards carefully.'

'Sir, there is a situation in Nadus. There was a massacre at the Roulette stadium, and some 258 IP-2 lives have been killed. Mostly Magathian males, but the victim includes many females and kids too. A few Dhartal also got killed.' The Secretary to Ralf reported to him at midnight. Ralf was known to have worked till late, and still, he was always the first to reach the office. He was a machine which worked tirelessly.

'Ok. I will call Governor Khatu of Nadus to ensure things are handled properly.'

'Ok, Sir. Just two important updates President Nodi of Magath is also killed. He died because of the disproportionate shock used by the marshal, and the marshal was killed by the crowd.'

'Oh. That is shocking. The killing of the beloved leader Nodi. Even I have met him once. But the people of Nadus have become so audacious to kill Nonpareil Soldiery. We need to check that. The glue which is ensuring that all the celestial bodies are united in Xorian rule is the Nonpareil Soldiery. Let me see. Thanks for the update.'

Ralf gave a mental command to one of the AGI humanoid-shaped robots, which looked like a beautiful white girl, and she immediately connected Ralf with Governor Khatu.

'Sir. I was expecting your call.' Khatu was an Ausulvanian Namuh who was given the full responsibility of Nadus. It was his duty that Nadus pay its taxes to Xor on a regular basis. The Nonpareil Soldiery was in complete control and was stationed at Nadus.

'You are as stupid as the Ausulvanians are. You should call me and not wait for my call. How many IP-2 lives were present in the stadium.' Ralf said through the communicator. Khatu can see the vision of Ralf as if Ralf was in front of him. The new holographic technique allowed this communication within short ranges.

'Sir, around 1200.'

'The casualty is less than 300. What nonsense?'

'Sir, because then the local police intervened and ensured that droids stopped firing. They controlled the situation. There were small kids too.'

'So what. Was any local policeman or local administrator got killed?'

'No sir. Our droids are auto-trained to stop when no hostility is there.'

'They are idiotic machines.'

'I would have fired you from the job. But one thing is good it is well publicized that the marshal killed that idiot Nodi deliberately. I want this to be publicized subtly in the large population of not only the Magathian but Dhartal and across Nadus.'

'Yes, sir. But this will stoke a big rebellion.'

'Stupid. Don't apply your mind. You otherwise also have very limited stock. It will exhaust. Do as I say. Also, see if something grave can happen. I have to visit Nadus, but when something really bad happens.' Ralf gave the command to the white humanoid AGI to end the communication. The best part of communication through her was that it was encrypted, and no one could record or peep in.

It was on all the news channels on the planet of Nadus that Governor Khatu had declared Part 2 Emergency. This means that all the administrative, executive, judicial, financial, and policing powers were vested with Governor Khatu.

'Gor, you have seen this news. Check your handheld.' Loki, who was sitting in the saloon for a new hair cut told his barber.

'Yes. Surprising. This Khatu has not even apologized for the ill-behaviour that his marshal of Nonpareil Soldiery showed. He used such brute force against an old and respected person. Then what happened was merely a reaction. Now to punish us all, they have imposed an Emergency that too Part 2.' Gor the barber stopped the newly styled laser blade through which it was shaping the hair of Loki.

'But what do you think. What will happen now.'

'Loki, I feel we are heading for a tough time. Hope this time, this tyrant Khatu doesn't increase the taxes. He is known for exploiting.'

'What about the pride?' said a hooded person in an angry tone. He seemed to be an outsider and not from the village of Tuna, where Loki and Gor belonged to. He looked like a Magathian. But what was he doing in the land of Dhartal?

'Who are you?' Enquired Gor.

'That is not important. I am also, like all of us, a slave of Xor. I may be born a slave, but I will not die as a slave. I am not like you people who are only worried that Khatu should not increase taxes. My blood boils when I see those alien Xorian on my soil of this great planet Nadus. I belong to this planet. I have grown here. I have to throw them out.' The middle-aged Magathian shouted in an irate tone.

'It is easy to daydream. You don't even know the full strength of Xorian might.' Gor dismissed the large claims of that stupid Magathian, who didn't need a haircut but some head surgery, so his brain started talking sense.

'This is not daydream. We, the Nadusian, the 250 million+ strong. How many are the Xorian on our planet? How many is their Nonpareil Soldiery? Hardly a few hundred. Still, we fear them. We work for them. We presume them our superior. Why can't we throw this General Khatu out.' Protested the Magathian.

'You have not read history. There was a protest for independence. What was the result? Are you aware? Ask your senior fellows if you have any relatives. We were brutally crushed. And how can we fight? They can cover the distance of the entire planet Nadus in their highly sophisticated warplanes. They have superior weaponry. Even if we kill those few hundred because of some stroke of luck or a miracle, the elevator between Nadus to Xor hardly takes any time to ship more such Nonpareil Soldiery here. Keep your stupid rebellion idea to yourself. We don't want to spend the rest of our life in some isolated cellar. We don't know you and requesting peacefully to get lost.' Gor was agitated. Talking about rebellion was also a crime in Nadus. He didn't want unnecessary trouble in such tough times. Already Khatu had declared an Emergency. Anything could happen.

'I am going. But remember you all, if anyone of you ever feels that you don't want to be a slave anymore, just shout FREE-ME three times at the temple of Kalba, my brethren, and I will reach out to you to become a free soul.' The mysterious-looking person left them all and started walking towards the tube station. He was an idiotic person, and now it seemed he was going to catch the tube to some other place. Gor pity such kind of patriotic people who, if rightly used, can be of good help to improve the economic situation of Nadus, which was in pretty bad shape.

'Though his numbers are correct. We are 250 million +, and they are just a few hundred. Elevators can be destroyed. Why can't we work on that line.' Loki was wondering and thinking aloud, it seemed.

'Are you crazy, Loki? Do you want to spend time in jail? Don't even think about such a misadventure. What happened in Roulette stadium itself should not have happened. What the marshal would have done. He would have presented Nodi to Governor Khatu. Khatu would have referred Nodi to the trial court in Xor. There Nodi would have either been acquitted or got some small penalty. But now, this nonsensical killing has resulted in an Emergency. We have to shell out more money to the government's coffer.'

'What, Gor. You always think about money and taxes. Here we are talking about greater things.'

'Like what. Pride. I don't have any. I feel ashamed to be a Nadusian. I have no pride. Ok. Now stop talking such seditious things here.'

Suddenly the hand-held instruments of all beeped. It showed an address by Governor Khatu to all the Nadusian that was telecasted. All in the saloon started to watch and hear the address with full anxiousness. Khatu's address may bode a bad omen for a long time.

'This is a dastardly attack. I must warn you all that such behaviour in any circumstances is unacceptable. I, therefore, declare that this Emergency shall continue for a period of one Tym (100 Earth years), and you all have no political rights for this period.'

'One Tym (100 Earth years) is a long period. As per the Nadus calendar, it means forty-five years. Our three generations will become the slave of this Khatu and his administration.' Shouted Loki.

'Shh. Stop; let us listen to the address. We shall analyze it later.' Gor shushed him.

'Also, let me tell you all that anyone who is found criticizing the Xorian Administration or taking part in any activity which can be considered political activity shall be put in the isolation cellar without trial under the preventive detention laws. The police shall be controlled by Nonpareil Soldiery, and the Chief Commissioner of Police of various regions shall report to the Lieutenant Jam of the Nonpareil Soldiery with immediate effect.' Khatu continued.

'What? Our Chief Commissioner of Police, who is such a senior official, will report to the juniormost officer of Nonpareil Soldiery. Jam doesn't know anything about policing.' Shouted Loki again.

'Shh. Listen Loki. I told you, let's do the analysis and criticism both later. Let me concentrate on what Khatu is saying.' Gor shouted at Loki this time.

'Your functions such as the business, corporate houses, trading, share market, animal trading, industries, factories etc. shall be continued as before, but they shall be completely governed by the Licensing requirement and every Franc (2 Earth's month or every month of Nadus) all the businesses whether big, medium or small need to renew their licenses from the Governor's office. Governor office can cancel any license anytime and/or impose any conditions whatsoever in the interest of Xorian rule it may decide for renewal.'

'I am telling you, this evil Khatu is going to kill our business by these new conditions.' Loki said impatiently.

'Hmm.' Gor was also now feeling like Loki. He did not shout at Loki to stop. Gor knew that next was about taxes. Already Khatu is known for his evil plans.

'And let me tell you all that with immediate effect, the taxes are 90% of your income assessed by the Governor's office or 150 thousand Rumini (currency of Nadus), whichever is higher. Whether you earn or not, you have to pay 150 thousand Rumini or its equivalent to the Governor's office. Nonpayment of tax or avoidance thereof shall result in a death sentence.

'Now say Gor.' Loki closed his device. He can't take it anymore.

'150 thousand Rumini. My income is unstable. Sometimes I earn 120,000 yearly, sometimes 200,000. If I have to pay 150,000 when I don't earn that much and 180,000 when I earn 200,000, I will be in a debt trap from which I can never come out. Why me, the majority of Nadusian will die? What is this Khatu up to? We must protest?' Gor said.

'All political activities are banned. Even the protest is banned. You will face jail time for such things.' Loki said.

C*ome to Kalba temple and shout FREE-ME.* The words of that mysterious man echoed in Gor's thoughts. What Khatu had announced was a slow death? Why not rebel if he had to live like this.

'You are thinking the same.' Loki said to Gor.

Gor nodded. This sudden announcement of Khatu had taken almost everything from what they had.

'I can visualize the plight of the Nadusian and also can see the gameplan of Ralf.' Dharma telepathized Tara while he was sipping coffee. Zoro specially made it to make Dharma feel at home. Dharma was not yet used to popping pills and quench his hunger and thirst.

'What do you think' Tara mockingly asked Dharma while trying this drink. She has never tasted such things in the recent past. She used to get the requisite energy from pills and 'vigour evanescent.'

'Khatu will create such situations that the people of Nadus – the Magathian, the Dhartals and others have no option but to revolt. Then Ralf will simply ask his people at Xor to elect him back to crush the revolt.'

'No Dharma. It is not that simple. See, during that time, Xor was already an Empire which had a presence across 400+ celestial bodies. It was a huge inter-stellar Empire. The political structure was such that the Governors or Chiefs of all these 400+ bodies together constituted the Governing Council, which was the supreme body. This Council then chose one amongst themselves as a supreme commander. But the General Council was the most powerful body. All these 400 statesmen were smart and shrewd. They cannot be easily fooled. Further, what happened on an inconsequential planet like Nadus cannot be the determining factor for voting next time. There were many prominent regions like the City, where many space cities were formed and which was the hub of financial transactions, the inner core where huge commerce happened. Nadus was not that important.'

'Then why was Ralf focusing so much on Nadus.' Dharma was confused.

'You think. You are smart. And let me enjoy my coffee.' Tara mocked Dharma.

'Hmm. Challenge accepted. Whatever you have told me until now, Nadus is a planet where Mag, Magmu and prisoners of war, i.e. Nadrimans, were shoved. They grew up here, and primarily Nadus is a potpourri of people who hate Acrimean and even Xorian.'

'You are on the right track. I love the way you start approaching any question.' Tara was delighted.

'But Nadus financially is not very important in the overall scheme of things. But it is a planet which is near Xor. There is a space elevator between Nadus and Xor. So, lots of trade happens with Nadus too. More so, Xor is not worried about Nadus. It can be captured anytime. It is near Xor, and with Stargaze ships Nadus cannot secede. But a rebellion by such an inconsequential planet can raise the spark for rebellion in far places.

Like you said, the City. I don't know how far it is but presuming it is a few solar systems away.' Dharma continued.

'Roughly ninety Light Years.' Zoro said in between.

'Thanks, Zoro. Such important business hubs are ninety Light Years away, are financially sound, and are far from Xorian centre. Why can't they declare independence? Though I remember that now the Xorian Empire is a federation, still, why shall I be a part of it. Why shall I allow Ralf to dictate policies even on limited items? After all, they pertain to my sovereign territory. And then always there looms a risk of a declaration of Emergency, and the governance of my celestial body will go into the hands of the Supreme Commander like Khatu did in Nadus. So why any celestial body situated far away shall be bound to Xorian ties. Further, as I recall, Xor doesn't have super-luminal travel capabilities at that time. So, to reach such places, they have to rely on Merkels, who can even charge more exorbitant rates to lend their Hyper-Drive propeller shuttles, the Indpros. Thus, the rebellion at Nadus can stoke rebellion at other places.' Dharma concluded.

'You are absolutely brilliant, Dharma. No one can guess that. It shows you are really special, my brother.' Tara couldn't stop praising Dharma.

'He is the best, My lady.' Zoro said in a very ecstatic tone.

'Few things let me complete.' Tara telepathized to Dharma and Zoro. 'Ralf wanted this rebellion to become big. But the focus should be on Nadus and how Ralf handled it there. Ralf wanted two things out of it. First, the rebellion of Nadus should look disastrous that people are ready to die but not accept Xorian rule and shall show how Ralf handled it in a larger-than-life manner. Then only Ralf will get the credibility that he needs to be reelected again.'

'But this is difficult.' Dharma said.

'True, and that's why this story is so interesting and important for us to learn. Eritrea is directly connected with Nadus. Because till the time Savitra65 reached Eritrea, Ralf had to ensure that Nadus revolted, the rebellion spread, and then Ralf controlled it just before the election time. So that his great deed was fresh in people's minds and he again was elected to the Supreme Commander of Governing Council, and he was free to choose his War council like all other executive and administrative posts.'

'Hmm. Interesting story.'

'Good job Khatu. I am happy.' Ralf had given a personal audience to Khatu. Almost two Franc (roughly four Earth months) had passed, and no bad news from Nadus. The tax collection had gone extremely high because of the minimum 150K Rumini policy of Khatu.

'Thanks, sir.' Khatu was elated as Ralf hardly praises anyone. Khatu, who was the Governor of Nadus, was an administrative appointee. Unlike other Governors or Commander-in-Chief Head of State of various other celestial bodies under the Xorian Empire, who were part of Governing Council, Nadus's Governor was just an administrative reporter and had no right to participate in Governing Council. Many say Khatu was just a puppet in the hands of Ralf.

'But I told you I wanted to visit Nadus. Something big should happen for me to visit. That you have not ensured.' Ralf growled. His temper was feared by all.

'Yes, sir.' Khatu responded, though his legs were trembling and his voice straining. He continued, 'I thought if I impose such tyrant measures, there will be upheaval, but it seems that Nadusians are spineless creatures. They did not revolt and accepted their fate.'

'Hmm. Do you think so? Isn't it possible that there is an undercurrent going? Something simmering which you cannot sense.'

'No sir. Nothing like that is there.'

'Ok. You go, but I want you to do something big. A big massacre of the Nadusians. You declare that the river Magi shall be outbound for Magathians. You know that river Magi is respected like a mother by Magathians. They worship their local Gods with the water of river Magi.'

'But how will it be of any benefit to us, Sir.'

'You stupid Khatu. I told you not to apply your mind. This action of yours will irritate them. Magathian will revolt, and I want you to crush that with iron hands. Kill at least 1000 plus this time. I want it big … remember big.'

Khatu nodded. *When everything is going smoothly, why does Ralf want such misadventures? The tax collection is fine. Things are in his control. The Nadusians have conceded their fate and are not protesting. Why, then, does Ralf want such things. River Magi is to be closed for Magathian. Don't know what this Ralf is eating nowadays.* Khatu had never understood this tyrant.

'Do you want to say something?' Ralf asked.

'No sir. I beg your leave.' Khatu said and, after a customary ceremonial salute, left the room.

Ralf gave a mental command to the white humanoid droid. She immediately understood, and a communication was set with an unknown person on the planet of Nadus.

'You are ready. Khatu is going to reach Nadus shortly from the space elevator in East–Zone 5' Ralf telepathized to the other side.

'Yes, sir. I know what to do.' The person from the other side messaged, and the white humanoid robot telepathized to Ralf.

'Don't commit any error. What about the weaponry? Did the Ivish traders meet you?' Ralf communicated through the white humanoid droid. Ivish was the moon of Outer Boy planet and was the home territory of Ralf. Ralf was the Governor of Ivish, and thus Ivish was also under the day-to-day supervision of Ralf. Ivish was now a prosperous place. It was divided into fourteen zones, and each zone was governed by a Zonal lord called I-lord.

'I have met the I-lord of Zone 13, and he has connected me with the traders. I now have the latest weaponry and also got the spaceships, Voyager and Crusaders.' The person from the other side, through a humanoid droid, responded. To an onlooker, it would appear as if Ralf was in telepathic conversation with the droid.

'Voyager and Crusaders are good. They have a max speed of 120 Lukum and 250 Lukum per Ahom. (equivalent to 60 million km per hour and 125 million km per hour by Earth standards). They will really help you and your people to quickly jump from one planet to another. I will ensure that the Nonpareil Soldiery is out of the picture. Because only they could intercept Voyager and Crusader.'

'Yes, sir. I am sending Crusader to Bobra with a full load. But it would take almost 11 Mex (44 Earth years). The plan is to spark it big when you control here at Nadus.'

'Ok. But ensure to have enough not only for Bobra but for Volsotovok and Parinjay too. I need it to look very serious.' Ralf commanded. Parinjay was a planet full of Acrimean, Bobra and Volsotovok full of Nadriman. All these three planets were part of the Acra solar system, which was around five light years away from the Xorian solar system.

'But Parinjay is friendly. It is your people. Mostly it is Acrimean.' The other person was confused.

'You will not understand these deep-rooted tricks. You are too small a fry in the given scheme of things. You better do as told. I want your Crusader to be fully prepared and reach at destination in 11 Mex time.

Because that is the time when I am going for election at Ivish, and soon thereafter, there will be the appointment of Governing Council at Xor. I want to be the Supreme Commander again, and for that, the Crusader must play its part.' Ralf cut the communication.



'Has the Governor gone mad?' Gor was talking to himself. He had just seen the news that River Magi was outbound for Magathian. Gor belonged to Dhartal, but he respected the sentiments of Magathian.

'Gor, your amount is due. When are you paying your taxes?' The smart device played the message from the local tax collector's office. It reminded Gor that this year he had not paid the tax. His income was not that high, but he still had to shell out 150 thousand Rumini as per the latest order of the Governor. Gor didn't have anything to even sell to get that much money. If he didn't pay, he would be thrown in jail.

Gor took some time and then started packing his stuff. He took a local taxi which is a self-driven car and reached the Kalba temple. He started shouting 'FREE-ME.'

'Seems someone has not read the history.' A familiar voice responded.

'History I have read, we have lost both the Solar Civil War and The War of Glory, but I have no choice. Governor Khatu is behaving madly. Who knows what next he will order. Better get killed fighting him rather than in his isolation cellar.'

'Good choice. Your first task is very simple: wear this special cloth and reach the Khatu's office.'



'Who is there?' The armed gatekeeper of the Governor's office, Gate 1, enquired.

'I want to meet Governor Khatu,' Gor said.

'Who are you? Ralf, the Supreme Commander.' Mockingly asked the policeman manning Gate 1.

'Get lost.' Shouted another policeman.

'See you, small fellow, leave right now. We are in a bad mood today. Your family would never know where you got disappeared if you do not leave right away.' The first policeman manning Gate 1 said.

'Ok. I wanted to meet the Governor, but if you people don't allow it, then you share his fate.' Gor responded and closed his eyes.

Suddenly there was a huge blast, and both the policemen, as well as many others nearby, were killed. It was a massive bomb blast which was carried outside the Governor's office. This was an indication that the people of Nadus were fed up with the Governor's rule.

Khatu had just stepped out of the space elevator, East Zone 5, which connected Nadus to Xor. The elevator was a unique structure built with a special material that could beam people and material from Nadus to Xor and back almost instantaneously. This Gateway, though, was in control of Khatu and only with his order could it be used. The security, too, was handled by the loyalist of Khatu. Khatu was surprised to see that his trusted people were nowhere to be seen, and only droids were all around.

'Sir, there is a blast near your office. You cannot go to your office. We must take you to safety.' The AGI humanoid robot told Khatu, who had just come out of the pad. He was summoned by the Supreme Commander and now was returning after meeting in person with Supreme Commander Ralf.

'Who has done such a dastardly act?' Khatu enquired. While getting out of the Vehemence Gateway room and moving towards the reception area.

'We don't know yet, sir. But we have sent our best soldiers and officers there.' Robot responded. The battery of AGI robots was walking alongside Khatu. Khatu reached the endpoint.

'But where is my security officer.' Khatu questioned. He was surprised that there were unfamiliar AGI robots in this all-important Gateway station. The station was always under the control of Nonpareil soldiers, and the in charge was a Namuh.

'Sir, I am in charge of your security.' One AGI robot said. The tone was unnatural, even to a droid. Khatu was not sure what was happening. He was away for a short while, and someone had ordered a complete change in security at the Gateway station. It was an important station for security purposes. The Gateway directly connects to the mother planet Xor. It was highly sensitive. Who ordered the removal of Nonpareil Soldiery.

'I meant the Namuhian soldiers. Those who were in charge of my security.' Khatu asked.

'Sir, they are all gone to your office, and now your full security is our responsibility. We have a battery of Robots, sir, which is Ziti[6] approved. Don't think that we are any less than a natural person. We, in fact, are better than them.'

'What rubbish. Who ordered the natural people to go for the security of my office and leave the AGIs here for my security.'

'You only ordered, sir. We have your order in writing.' The robot showed a vision of the written communication which Khatu had sent a day before to all the security in charge that when he reached Nadus from Xor through the space elevator, he didn't want any natural person around as there was a mole, and he wanted to find out who.

'What nonsense. I have not written any such communication.'

'I have written it. Your systems were easy to hack.' A distant voice coming through the AGI robot said.

'What?' Khatu was surprised.

'Don't worry.' AGI Robot continued, 'I have hacked this droid and others too. They are acting on my command.'

'Who are you?' Khatu was shocked.

'A small fry. My name is FREE-ME,' the droid said. Suddenly the droid gave a hard punch to Khatu, making him unconscious, and he lifted Khatu in his arms. He walked out of the station and flew away in an unknown direction. All the systems were hacked for some time, and none could act.

There was a live telecast visible to all Nadusians as well as in the command centre of the Governor's office and Nonpareil Soldiery's office. Almost all the Nadusians were glued to their devices, watching with intent. This was telecasted even on the Xorian mother planet. One masked man was holding Khatu and was slowly cutting the thumb and index finger of the right arm of Governor Khatu. The message was displayed that this was the hand with which Khatu had signed the document declaring an Emergency in Nadus. If the same was not removed soon, the Nadus would revolt.

[6] Ziti was the agency which approved the AGI robots and ensures their functionality abiding with legal and regulatory framework.

Another message came that if Khatu was required alive, then Nonpareil Soldiers should leave the planet Nadus and Gateway stations be disbanded.

'This is a horrific incidence.' Governor Sadhu from Aidni telepathized to all present in the meeting of Governing Council, which was taking place in light of the kidnapping of Khatu and such torturous videos.

'Nadus has a history of violence. See their game, Cress. No sophisticated and modern society plays such an ancient torturous game.' Another Governor said.

'Thanks all for participating in this meeting. I know only those from nearby planets and the moon could make it, as this meeting was called suddenly. But the situation was such. Nevertheless, I am happy that the minimum quorum of a hundred is managed.' Ralf telepathized to all. As Ralf had called a sudden meeting of Governing Council, those who were from far bodies could not reach it. They all use the Merkels transport system Indpro or Wormhole travels to reach Xor. Many couldn't afford it, and many felt that it was not important to attend such meetings and were busy with the affairs of their planets/moon etc.

'Nadus is getting out of hand. If you all say let's punish them brutally.' One Governor suggested.

'There is already a 90% tax, no political rights, and the inbred are treated like dirt. What else punishment do you want.' Another member protested.

'Calm, people.' Ralf telepathized in a stern tone. 'I have called this emergency meeting for a simple purpose. Nadus is behaving quirkily. But the problem is soon, other planets and bodies may also decide and take up this route. We all are administrators of our celestial bodies and know there are multiple problems. But if violence becomes an acceptable norm, then it can create multiple problems for all of us.'

'I don't understand how these Nadusian got such sophisticated weapons. The blast outside Governor Khatu's office was lethal weaponry. This can go undetected and can be controlled by mental waves. Likewise, hacking of Khatu's system and the AGI droids could not be done by an ordinary hacker. The cyber systems were part of Nonpareil Soldiery. This cannot be done by rookie terrorists. This requires highly skilled training. And from where the money is coming. Nadus is broke.' One Governor hit the nail and asked tough questions.

'This is not important right now. We have many enemies. Don't forget Mishians are flushed with money and high in technology. Merkels also wants Xor to be dismembered. Maybe some Thyzerian. The important

thing is not to worry about the source of money of the terrorist or their important weaponry; thing is to find a way to end the cause. How can we end this cause which makes people think about seceding? We after the War of Glory decided to give the individual bodies more rights. A loose federation, but it seems we are losing our grip because of this loose federation. I propose a strong centre with lots of powers consolidated in the hands of individual Governors and ultimately the Governing Council.' Ralf diverted the topic to the area sensitive to these leaders.

'But we already have control. Governors or Administrative Heads control the celestial body, and only for a few items does the Governing Council, with its chief, the Supreme Leader, have a say. Mostly it is for interplanetary trade rules, war, Nonpareil soldiery etc. So, I did not understand when you said a strong centre with powers in the hand of individual Governors. It is an oxymoron.' Shini, the Acrimean Namuh and Governor of Sur said. She is known to be straightforward in her approach. She belonged to the group which didn't want Ralf to become Supreme Commander the second time. Though many could telepathize, many still believed in a vocal speech to put across a point firmly.

'Lady Shini, you are missing the point. I am saying the Governing Council shall pass an order that for next one Tym, there shall be no elections in the celestial body, and the current Governors have the right to rule their bodies.' Ralf tried to please the governors.

'And the Supreme Commander will automatically remain for next Tym.' Shini retorted. 'May I know what the extreme emergency that justifies such decision is? Hon'ble Supreme Commander, I believe that the abduction of Governor Khatu of Nadus and the small terrorist attack on the Governor's office in Nadus doesn't justify such drastic measures. We should concentrate on solving Nadus's problem and not exacerbate the problem to other bodies. After a lot of thought and deliberations, we have come to the current governance framework, and this shall not be disturbed.' Shini was firm.

'Ok, Lady Shini. But what if the terrorism of Nadus is contagious. What if the groups at Sur which are not happy with your policies take up arms? What if the Nadrimans of planet Bobro say they want to secede?'

'We shall cross those bridges when they come. Right now, it is a small law and order problem in Nadus. Governor Khatu's administration couldn't handle it. I am sure Hon'ble Supreme Commander and his office are far more capable of handling this situation. We should not waste more time on this. I have another agenda point for this august house. Our mega-scopes

have found out that four Savitra65 ships have been launched from the military post of X141 towards an unknown space. These are the best of the ships that we have, and why are they going in such an unchartered direction. On whose order. It indicates something fishy.'

'Lady Shini, those ships might be on routine reconnaissance. How is that movement such an important topic for this esteemed house?' Ralf cut her in between.

'Because, Hon'ble Supreme Commander, we have only fifteen Savtra65 ships. They are the fastest which we have. They are supposed to be around the Xorian inner group so that in case of an emergency, those ultra-fast shuttles can help our cause. They are not to be sent on a reconnaissance mission. For that, we have Voyagers and Crusaders in abundance.'

'I will check and report the house in the next meeting.' Ralf had no option but to concede that he had to report about the movement of Savitra65 ships to the house.

'So this means the Supreme Commander was oblivious to this fact. I feel you are spending too much time with Governor Khatu. You are picking up his skill set.' Shini retorted.

Ralf did not like that a wee bit. His authority was undermined by this Shini. But soon, Ralf had to find the answer to the pertinent queries asked by Shini. The Governing Council would seek answers. Ralf had to do something fast.

'It is interesting to note that the Earth's politics and politics of the mighty Xorian Empire are all the same.' Dharma finished his coffee while commenting on the story.

'See IP-2 onwards or simply putting human behaviour across universes remains the same. It is governed by greed and hostility towards others.' Tara telepathized.

'I agree. Ralf was cornered. It is hardly a few Franc or, let me say few months, Earth standards, and his Savitra65 movement was noticed. He wanted to use Nadus's event to get the leadership for one Tym, i.e. a hundred years. I believe he is too naïve to even propose this.'

'No Dharma. Ralf was not naïve. He was a shrewd politician. He simply seeded the thought that it is possible and within the powers of the Governing Council to decide that for the next one hundred Earth years or

one Tym, there shall be a status quo. He knew some small blast at Nadus would not merit such a decision, but he was seeding the thought. What if tomorrow there is a grave emergency. What if there was an attack from Merkel or a civil war broke out in the Empire among various planets? Then Governing Council should declare the Supreme Commander and the Governors as the leaders for the next Tym.'

'Agreed. But what kind of body is this. If this body declares that there shall be no election for the next Tym or one hundred years, it is in favour of these Governors. This is a conflict-of-interest situation. The Governor himself deciding that they shall remain Governors forever.'

'You are thinking too much from Earth's perspective. But yes, you are correct. It reeks of a conflict of interest. But you see, out of the 400 plus celestial bodies, almost a hundred are such which are not democracies, in your term. They don't elect. There the leaders are otherwise also perpetual.'

'Yes, you told me that many celestial bodies have different rules, and the Chiefs are either the military lords or the richest person based on ancestry or another criterion.'

'These people are agnostic, and they shall only allow others to remain as perpetual Governors if they find merit in the proposal.'

'Agreed. I missed that point.'

'Not only that, Dharma, even those elected are different types of leaders. Suppose the Governor of Sur, Shini is sure that her people love her and she has no competition. Why would she want a situation in which the Supreme Commander remains the same? She would rather want to fight for Supreme Commander.'

'Agreed. That is also a valid point. Therefore, this proposal that all shall remain as Governors for a Tym may not be that easy to fly as it looks apparently.'

'Absolutely correct, Dharma. Now you got the undercurrent of the politics.'

The brutal killing of Governor Khatu was everywhere. Slowly and gradually, the disturbing visuals were the talk of the entire Empire.

'Horrible. Captain, have you seen this video.' The crew of the ship 'Davil Who', which transported goods mined at Khart, the moon of Nadus, to Xor. Khart was rich with many minerals, and this uninhabited celestial

body was the one which had allowed Xor with certain minerals which were otherwise not available. The mission to Nothing planet – Nadus was a failure; the only saving grace was Khart. The moon with huge resources of variegated minerals. Spaceship 'Davil Who' was one amongst many that transported these minerals from this moon to Xor and other planets and moons.

'Yes, Lobo. I saw. The brutality is so gruesome. Khatu didn't deserve this treatment. He is also an Ausulvanian, and I knew his family. This shipment we are taking is for the company owned by first cousins of Khatu.' The captain, who was also an Ausulvanian Namuh, said in a sad voice.

Suddenly there was an alarm that rang. A small drone flew towards the captain and displayed a vision. Captain could see that a huge warship whose coordinates read 'The Voyager 201' was within striking distance and had sought for allowing to connect the frequency. If the same was permitted, it would allow Voyager 201 to beam the goods in the cargo area of this transport ship to Voyager 201.

'This is a space robbery,' Lobo shouted. 'The situation at Nadus is so bad that they have now started robbing the transport ships of Nadus's moon Khart.'

'Calm down, Lobo.' Captain said.

'What are your demands.' Captain, through the drone, started sending a message to Voyager 201.

'You don't look that stupid.' Came the response shortly from the Voyager 201.

'I didn't get it seriously.' Captain wanted to buy some time. He has already gestured to his other crew member to somehow inform the Nonpareil Soldiery ship nearby to save them. Any SOS this ship sends would definitely reach the patrolling Nonpareil Soldiery, and they surely would save them.

'If you think you can buy time by this stupid tactic, forget it. The nearest Nonpareil Soldiery patrol ship is at Ycop.' Barked the voice from Voyager 201. Ycop was almost 7 billion km (Earth std.) away from Khart – the moon of Nadus.

After a pause, the voice from Voyager 201, coming through electronic communication, commanded, 'Stop wasting time. Connect the beam and stream the entire goods to us. Otherwise, we shall destroy your ship, and the death of the entire crew shall be on the captain's head.'

'Do as they say?' Captain ordered his crew.

Soon the goods got beamed to the dacoit vessel. The Voyager 201 was leaving. The Captain and Crew took a sigh of relief. But before they could even wipe the smile of relief from their face, they saw many destructive torpedoes fired at them. Captain knew that the robbers didn't only want their goods, they wanted their life too. Before the captain could act, the transport ship was hit with lethal projectiles and incinerated immediately. The ship Davil Who, a vibrant, lively transport vehicle, was now orbiting Khart as motes of dust.

'This has become very serious. We need to do something for the terrorist.' The administrative council, which reported to Ralf, said in a unanimous tone.

'Agreed. I take charge of the Governorship of Nadus. I will spend some time at Nadus now.' Ralf declared.

'What? Sir, this is a preposterous idea. Nadus is not that important. We have Nonpareil Soldiery. They will take care of this stupid terrorist group FREE-ME.' One of the administrators in the council remarked in a concerned tone.

'No. The problem in Nadus cannot be only handled through an iron fist. I know we have the most sophisticated weapons. But the problem of Nadus can be handled only when I involve myself there.'

'But if the Supreme Commander of this great Empire shall engage in such a trivial issue, don't you think it will lower your esteem and accordingly your followings across the Empire. Remember, sir, the next election is just ten Mex away.' One of Ralf's political advisors telepathized personally to him. She was one the best as far as political science goes.

'That is true, Nish. But I cannot let this spark grow big. Nadus is showing to others that if such an insignificant planet can have the courage to take on the mighty Empire, others can follow suit. Remember, we have Mishian in our backyard. They are watching the events closely. What if they decide to fund such terrorism elsewhere. I need to find a political situation for this. Fire cannot be doused by fire. And the next election is still ten Mex away. If I can find a solution to this problem, it would be better.'

'Sir, you may not solve the problem by taking charge of Nadus; you might be adding fuel to the fire.' Nish, the great political scientist who was Acrimean Namuh, responded.

Ralf got a small grin on his face. No one in his administration knew what was really in his mind. The problem of Nadus was still not something which was troubling the other stellar systems. Life was routine there. They all felt that Nadus, termed Nothing Planet by Xor itself, was invisible to them. What happened to those primaeval people was no one's concern. The majority of Nadusians were either Mag or Magmu, with few Nadrimans. No one in the entire Empire seemed to care for them.

'I am not adding fuel to the fire, Nish. My decision is final. Please ensure the necessary administrative orders are passed. Arrange my visit to Nadus shortly. My address to Nadus shall be widely telecasted.'

'Ok, Sir'. The senior secretary in charge of the administrative council said in affirmative.

'My dear Nadusians, you are part of the great Empire of Xor, which has its boundaries as far as X141 Apsis coordinate C4'5:42.09 to Alibri C5'0:40.00 and Ishan Apsis coordinate C0'1:41.05 to John Apsis coordinate C9'9.41.04. Which means we cover the entire C40 to C42 high Apsis coordinate. This translates to an Empire as big as seventy Tymlight square. Even if we use the most sophisticated Indpro (warp engine space shuttles), it will take six Franc (one Earth year) for us to traverse from Alibri stellar system to X141 or Ishan solar system to John. You are part of this mighty Empire. We have the policy of 'one Empire, one nationhood, many thoughts'. We enjoy the benefit of the mighty Empire but are governed by individual local administrators for local issues. This is a win-win situation for all. Many have grown tremendously due to this policy. Because if an individual planet does not have the protection of Nonpareil Soldiery, it will go bankrupt just fighting the space pirates and star-marauders. Nadus hitherto is a dominion of mother planet Xor because we believe the majority of citizens of Nadus are Xorians; you all have ancestors who were Xorian, either the brethren Mags or Magmus or our own Nadrimans. Hence this policy of Nadus is governed directly by Xor. But with time, things have to change. We are ready to discuss the political situation. We are ready to give certain autonomy in the hands of Nadusians. I am extremely disturbed by the actions that have taken place in the past period, whether it be the killing of President Nodi or the FREE-ME terrorists who have brutally killed Khatu and the misadventures of looting the transport ships. But let

bygones be bygones. Let's unite for a prosperous tomorrow. For this, let me propose that for the next two Mex, that is, 3½ Nadus years, I shall be the Governor of Nadus, and the problems of Nadus shall be directly addressed by the Supreme Commander's office. I assure you that I shall lay the seeds for making Nadus as progressive as Ivish, if not more. Further, after that, we shall allow the five regions of Nadus to be governed independently as per their local constitution and slowly will ensure that in a few Nadusian years, you are controlled by a local Governor.'

This was a big step. It necessarily means that Supreme Commander was taking an interest in Nothing Planet. Supreme Commander himself shall be the Governor of the planet Nadus means more funds and attention to the planet. Also, no Supreme Commander had ever promised that Nadus shall be governed independently.

The Governing Council had met when around two Mex (8 Earth years around) had passed since Ralf had taken over the governance of Nadus. The terrorist activity of FREE-ME was sporadic during this period. In the Governing Council meeting, unlike 3 Mex before when the urgent meeting was called for discussing planet Nadus when Shini raised the issue of movement of Savitra65, this time, full members were present. The Governing Council met only once in ten Mex (forty Earth years), but this time it has met thrice in the past ten Mex. The agenda for this meeting was serious for them.

'Who authorized the Supreme Commander to declare independence to Nadus. As per the Council Protocol 141 read with the minor's clause 14, without the prior consent of the Governing Council Supreme Commander cannot declare either war on alien land or can give away the territory of the Xorian Empire.' Shini was forceful in her arguments.

'I guess the Lady Shini not listening to what she is telepathizing to all. Neither war has been declared nor any territory ceded to any alien power.' Ralf was sarcastic.

'My Hon'ble Supreme Commander, when it says giving away territory, it means the change in the schedule for the territory. The territory Nadus was under the direct administrative control of mother planet Xor. It was Xor Administered Territory. And you, by a public announcement, declared that XAT shall now be Autonomous Territory. Converting XAT to AT

is giving away the territory. I hope you should listen to learned people instead of your puerile loyalist.'

'Lady Shini, conversion of XAT to AT is not giving away territory for the purposes of Council Protocol 141 read with minor clause 14. If you have a doubt, let me take the legal opinion from Dumble & Dore ML, the best law firm in the Empire. Yes, their bill would be recovered from the additional taxes we would impose on Sur if it says conversion to XAT to AT is not covered in protocol 141.' Ralf was toxic in his response to Shini.

'Let's not get into this bickering.' The Military Chief of Bobro intervened. 'Whatever done is done. Now the question is whether this Governing Council has an objection to Nadus being a new AT and thus part of Governing Council in future. I don't see any reason. In fact, Nadus was one of the very first planets terraformed by our common ancestors, and it has suffered a lot for so long as it was always treated as Nothing Planet. Now the time is right to undo the wrong and give Nadus its rightful place in this council.' Bobro's chief was a Nadriman Namuh. Bobro was controlled by a Military leader who was the supreme lord. Bobro's chief, Treta, had a resounding personality of a dictator. Generally, he didn't take no for an answer, but Ralf was a bigger despot than Treta, and Treta acknowledged that fact. Ralf had a certain constituency who still felt about the Acrimean supremacy, and this was why Ralf had great support in the Governing Council.

Ralf was laughing inside. He was sure that the Governing Council was confused.

Suddenly the bionic secretary of the Governing Council, who was recording the proceeding, intervened. 'Sorry, the Hon'ble members, but there is an urgent message which the Chief Marshal of Fleet 2 of Nonpareil Soldier for Supreme Commander. He says it is very urgent.'

'Read the message allowed. I don't hide things from Governing Council.' Ralf declared in a confident tone. He wanted to show down this Shini, who was a cinder in Ralf's eye.

'Hon'ble Supreme Commander, I am afraid to state that all four Space Elevators connecting Nadus and Xor have been damaged beyond recompense. Zone 5, Zone 10, and Zone 12 elevators were attacked when they were carrying luggage and IP-2 life, causing huge damage to Xorian lives, among others. Zone 4 elevator was closed for repairs; thus, there was no damage to IP-2 life there. We got the message when we were patrolling the Khart.'

'See, my lord Supreme Commander, and you wanted to give Nadus a place in Governing Council. First, we feel that you should stem the terrorism and then think about such misadventures.' Shini was excited by the news.

'Majority of us feel that you should take back the decision of converting Nadus from XAT to AT. This can be decided at a later date. At present, it is important to curb terrorism. You can appoint an able administrator.' Another member of Governing council said.

'Ok. I agree with this august house's decision. I shall take back the order of converting Nadus to AT. It shall remain in XAT for an indefinite time. However, I shall be the Governor of Nadus for another five Mex, then will replace someone suitable. Nadus needs my attention. As rightly pointed out by Chief Treta that Nadus has been wronged for years, and now is the time to rectify it.'

Governing council passed the resolution, and after another discussion on taxes etc., the meeting ended.

'We shall meet these FREE-ME leaders. Can you arrange my meeting with them?' Shini was talking to the most influential businessmen called the Jagat Seth in Nadus.

'Yes, I can arrange it. But things cost.' Jagat Seth was a shrewd businessman and understood only the language of money.

'How much Rumini do you want.'

'My noble Lady, Rumini is the currency of Nadus, and no one gives a damn about it. I want 100,000 Tymex Currency.'

'Are you out of your mind? 100,000 Tyc. That is the cost of an Indpro starship. I cannot shell out that kind of money for this stupid meeting.'

'That is up to you. But if you want to overthrow Supreme Commander Ralf, you should forge a relationship with FREE-ME. The election for Supreme Commander is not very far. Hardly seven Mex (28 Earth years) or so. Now it is up to you whether you want to utilize this opportunity or simply want to sit on the pile of money.'

'But still 100 K Tyc. This is huge. It is just a meeting.'

'My noble Lady, the annual income of Sur is five million Tyc. The accounts are in your control. No one will ever know if you shell out 100 K for military budget because terrorism is increasing in the neighbourhood.'

'Ok. You are far shrewd a businessman Jagat Seth. I will pay 50,000 Tyc now and the remaining after the meeting. But this shall be arranged soonest.'

'Just to be mindful about the timelines, Ralf ordered Savitra65 to Eritrea, and immediate trouble at Nadus started with the killing of President Nodi. In three Mex or twelve years (Earth std), all the events took place where the terrorist activities of FREE-ME increased, governance of Nadus was overtaken by Supreme Commander Ralf in person, and Shini met the leader of FREE-ME. Still, 22 Mex is to go before the Eritrea War begins. And around 8–9 Mex time for the election of Supreme Commander'. Dharma just thought loudly.

'You are correct, Dharma. Ralf is trying to divert attention. He had another 8–9 Mex time as Supreme Commander. That he has to ensure not only does the situation become worse, but he comes out as a clear leader who can handle this grave situation. His personality should come over as larger than life.' Tara telepathized.

'But why Shini is planning to meet this terrorist FREE-ME, that too by paying such huge money.'

'That you will come to know shortly.'

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## CHAPTER 12

# The First Eritrean War – Beginning

'How can I help my Lady Shini.' FREE-ME terrorist was relaying a message from a distant unknown place which was coming to Shini through a bionic girl. FREE-ME enjoyed communication through bionic and AGI-based droids.

'Hi. How shall I address you.' Shini was on the moon Khart of Nadus, in a safe house artificially made to host human life on this otherwise barren land. It was used by the top executives of the mining companies visiting Khart. But after the terrorist incident, the mining at Khart was closed for a long time. However, looking at the safe house and its maintenance, it seemed this terrorist FREE-ME or his aide visited this place regularly. The oxygen supply was decent, and atmospheric pressure was maintained. 'Vigor evanescent' were there to ensure quenching hunger and thirst.

'You can call me FREE-ME. I am the organization unto myself.' An arrogant tone responded through a telepathic message relayed by the bionic girl.

'Ok, FREE-ME. I know you are interested in Nadus' secession from the Xorian rule. I, the Governor of Sur, am interested in the wellbeing of Sur and of the Xorian Empire.'

'Well, my Lady, if I may say so that both the statements are untrue if not blatant lies. You are here to ensure your personal interest, and you know that I am also interested in my personal well-being and not Nadus' liberation. It will help both of us if we are honest with each other.'

Shini was shocked at such a crude comment. She responded. 'Ok. I agree. See, I want to be the Supreme Commander, and the elections are hardly eight Mex away. You need funds and protection. Sur can give you protection. We can offer you funds and weaponry. But we need you

to create such a circumstance to prove that Ralf is thoroughly incapable of solving your problem. Then I will, at the last moment, come out as a saviour. Your people will be arrested or killed. Some of your assistants will be projected as FREE-ME, and we will prosecute the proxy. You can enjoy in Sur with the money and lead a completely joyful life.'

'Well, who told you I need your protection or money.'

'No one. But aint you need such support. Aren't you scared of the Nonpareil Soldiery? They will catch hold of you one day. I am offering you a better life forever.'

'But I can strike a similar deal with Ralf. Why shall I deal with you?'

'Haha. If you are so gullible to trust the crooked Ralf, go ahead.'

'I was just testing you. No one in the entire Muverse trust Ralf. I agree with your proposal. But to ensure our camaraderie, you have to pay me an amount of five million Tyc.'

'Five million Tyc. Are you crazy? I cannot afford that much.'

'Then let me take the risk with crooked Ralf' He was about to end the communication.

'No, wait. Let's be reasonable. I shall pay you one million Tyc. Believe me, that is huge.' Shini bargained, but it sounded more like a mercy plea. Tyc was the currency based on highly sophisticated blockchain code that was anonymous and untraceable. Transferred through mental command. Tyc worked across Fran galaxy. The currency was managed by Tymex with a Thyzer lord overseeing it.

'Well, one million Tyc is too less. But to give you some comfort and time, I will take one million Tyc as advance and near your election, you have to shell out another million Tyc. Further, in between, you have to give me and my people shelter at Sur and modern weaponry.'

'I agree.'

The bionic girl ended the communication. Immediately from an unknown place, the FREE-ME leader made a highly secure call to the white humanoid droid of Ralf.

'Congrats. You became a millionaire. Very few millionaires exist in Fran.' Ralf said without waiting to hear from the other side.

'How do you know that it is a million Tyc.' FREE-ME was surprised.

'I know you and Shini both.'

'You are a genius. What are my next orders?'

'Enjoy your million. Attack on mother planet Xor. I want heavy devastation.'

'But mother planet Xor is super secure. It is almost impossible to penetrate.' FREE-ME's tone had a tinge of hesitation.

'Ask Sur to help.'

'Ok. Will try.'

Nodol–the capital of mother planet Xor. The Security Office, which kept a vigil on the entire planet, worked round the clock. It was mostly manned by AGI humanoid robots. The head of these robots was a Senior Officer who reported to Chief Security Officer (CSO).

In one such security office, the AGI robotic guard was monitoring a strange activity. It gave a mental command to zoom in, and was shocked to see what appeared on the large artificial screen. It reported to another AGI at the central command.

'There is some kind of activity in our lower orbit space.' The AGI humanoid telepathized while entering the cabin of their boss. The Senior Officer.

'You are correct,' the Senior officer of the command centre responded, looking at the data shared by her assistant.

'It seems that some projectile is approaching us.' AGI assistant telepathized.

'Don't worry, our defence system will destroy it in mid-space. It will not reach our environment.' Namuhian lady comforted her robotic assistant.

As the senior officer suggested, the projectile was destroyed in mid-air. But it shot some kind of rays, and this interrupted the systems for a short while. Before anyone could understand anything, a barrage of projectiles was shot. The defence system of Xor had neutralized all the projectiles, but with each such neutralization, the projectiles shot strange rays which were impacting the communication system.

'We need to inform the CSO immediately,' the Senior officer said and immediately gave the mental command to connect with Chief Security Officer. CSO was responsible for the security of the Xorian planet. It seemed an attack on the mother planet had happened in all directions. Some 120 projectiles covering the full 360 degrees of planet Xor were shot, and they disrupted the communication network. Even the communication between the senior officer and CSO was disrupted.

To the utter surprise of all, 'Classic Star', a transport ship, was falling down, shooting SOS signals. It seemed that the transport ship had met with an accident and was suffering a free fall. The senior officer with limited communication was able to relay the air force to safely bring the 'Classic Star' to land.

Soon the planes were airborne, and they shot nano-ropes at Classic Star and slowly descended it to land. However, when the Classic Star was hardly 1 Um or 1 km (Earth standard) above the ground, there was a huge blast equivalent to a nuclear explosion and almost forty square Um area was impacted. The entire fauna, flora, building, everything was destroyed.

The projectiles had disturbed the radar system of Xor, and it could not pick that Classic Star was carrying a highly sophisticated nuclear fusion bomb.

'Supreme Commander, it is not our fault. It just happened.' The CSO pleaded.

'I am not here to listen to excuses. You are fired and will be prosecuted.' Ralf commanded. 'How come such a huge blast happened at the centre of the Xorian Empire. Who is behind this dastardly act? I need to find this out. General Viz, you are now the in-charge of the operation.'

'But sir, this is civilian defence.' Viz was confused.

'I don't care. You are now the in-charge. You will also hold the post of CSO. I want action. Also, General Viz activates your Nonpareil Soldiery. These terrorists have crossed all limits. I want them finished.' Ralf was visibly angry.

'We have no faith in the administration of Supreme Commander Ralf. We need to move an impeachment petition.' Said Governor Dell. He was the Governor of Xor. Supreme Commander Ralf – who was also Governor of Ivish (moon of Outer Boy) – the Federal Lord of Xorian Federation was housed in Xor. Though Governor Dell was the administrative head for intra-planetary issues of Xor. He was elected by the Xorian public.

'I second your thought.' Said the voice on the other side of telepathic communication through an interplanetary communicator. This voice was of Governor Shini of Sur.

'I am ready to move the impeachment petition. We need to talk to other members. It needs twenty-five people to move the application and 300 to win.' Governor Dell said. He was agitated that his trusted CSO was kicked out by Ralf, and the entire power, even for local issues, had been given to General Viz, who was known for his loyalty towards Ralf.

'But getting even 100 supporters would be difficult, leave alone 300. Ralf is a powerful person.' Shini cautioned Dell.

'What you suggest then.'

'We should start creating a public opinion against Ralf and his in-capabilities. We should use our media houses for these purposes.'

'Agreed. I am ready to shell lots of money, but I want Ralf to be isolated.' Dell concluded.

Shini received another call, and thus she had to cut the call with Dell. This call was on a secure line through a droid that FREE-ME had gifted to Shini in their first meeting. All the communication with FREE-ME happened through this droid.

'Yes, FREE-ME'.

'You are not listening to the news of late.'

'I know there is an attack on the Xorian city of Nodol. Attacking the capital city of Xor was a majestic achievement.'

'That was old news.'

'What. This was the latest one.' Shini said in a surprised tone.

'Latest news is Nadus has declared independence, and Xorians are not allowed. Nadus is an independent state. We need people to support Nadus as an independent nation-state like Mishian. Shai was a moon of planet Xor, but now it is not counted in the political territory of Xor; likewise, from today onwards, Nadus is independent. We have given time for Acrimeans of Nadus to leave. Otherwise, they will be butchered and killed. Some 1000 Acrimeans have already been killed.'

'What. Let me switch on the news.' Shini gave a mental command, and the news was before her. The visions were directly telepathized to her by the cubical-shaped instrument.

'In an outrageous and unprecedented move, Nadus has declared independence. A sudden riot has broken out in Nadus, and the poor Acrimean are the target. They are brutally killed and tortured everywhere on the planet. FREE-ME has declared the entire planet of Nadus only for the locals. The Acrimeans and other aliens have been given a time of just three Nadus days to leave the planet. It seems the Nonpareil Soldiery has

a tough task at hand. Ralf administration is a failed administration.' Shini closed the channel and connected back to FREE-ME.

'This is a daredevil move. The entire Nonpareil Soldiery will be behind you now. They will attack and take back Nadus from you.'

'I know. Therefore, we need your support. We want Nadus to be declared an independent planet on the same lines as Mishian Shai. If one or two such provinces give us the support, we shall take the matter to Tymex so as not to face the wrath of Nonpareil Soldiery. We are in talks with Shai too.'

'But it is a very risky proposition for me.'

'We have to take the risk. You are not seeing how much risk I have taken. But see our success. The powerful Ralf administration is almost at its knee. We have attacked even the mother planet Xor that too, the city of Nodol, the main centre of business. Do you think it was easy?'

'No, I agree your success has been great. I don't know where you are getting the technology to do all such things, but I agree your success has been great. Ok. I will ask the Parliament of Sur to pass the order to declare Nadus independent.'

'Is this your administration? We have not seen a terrorist attack that too on mother planet Xor for the longest of time. We have not witnessed the lowly Nothing Planet get the guts to declare independence. This surely means the Ralf Administration has failed squarely. I want Ralf to step down willingly. Otherwise, we will take up the matter in Governing Council.' Governor Dell was addressing the inter-stellar scribes through a mass video telecast.

'But even there was an attack on Nodol. What was your security doing?' one of the celebrated media journalists, famous for asking tough questions, asked.

'We failed once. But then, who is responsible. It is Ralf's policy. It has failed tremendously. Who let these terrorists go scot-free when they assassinate Governor Khatu brutally. It was Ralf Administration's failure. Why is there no investigation about their finances or the weaponry.' Dell responded.

'We have Dr Dor, the representative of Ralf Administration. He is known to be very close to Supreme Commander Ralf. DD, as you are

affectionately called, what is your opinion, Ralf, a failed governance. The next election is around the corner.' The journalist connected with DD on the same channel so that both DD and Governor Dell could put across their points to the public at large.

'Thanks for having me. We need to see the events. In the past Tym, the growth rate of the Xorian Empire has been remarkable. New discoveries have taken place, and civilization has become almost immortal. Now coming to the specific event at Nadus. See, the Ralf Administration did everything possible to ensure Nadus was treated fairly. Never ever in history was Nadus given as much importance so as to govern it directly by the Supreme Commander. Now we are blaming the Ralf Administration for the fault of few. No one knows who is funding the terrorist. But I have a few important points. Everyone in the Xorian Empire knows that FREE-ME is a terrorist organization. But still, Sur was the first autonomous Xorian Administrative Center which recognized Nadus as an independent nation-state equivalent to Misha. So who is with the cause, and who is supporting the terrorist. Next, Sur has a huge financial anomaly. If you do an independent audit of their accounts, an amount of almost one million Tyc is fuzzed. I have full records which I am making public.' DD gave the command to his droid, and suddenly with all the scribes and Governor Dell, the Sur's annual accounts and analysis thereof was presented.

The telecast was being seen by Shini too.

'How can this DD get to know about the transaction. I am gone if this is made public.' Shini was literally trembling. She cannot withstand the humiliation that may ensue if her dealing with FREE-ME were public.

'Furthermore, it is not only the anomaly in accounts; I have a credible source that Lady Shini met this terrorist with the help of Jagat Seth. The full records are public.' DD continued.

Shini saw the recordings of her meeting with Jagat Seth, and it got public. Shini gave a mental command to her picabot clothes. Suddenly the clothes she was wearing became a noose of sharp blades, and the grip of the noose tightened on the neck of Shini, and it became harder and harder till Shini's head was severed from the torso. She was no more. She ended her life in the manner most prevalent in Xor.

'Sir, the plan is on track. Our ships have cleared a quarter of the distance and are on track without any trouble.' General Viz telepathized to Ralf. Viz and Ralf were going to meet the War Council. However, before meeting the War Council, Viz and Ralf were having a discussion about the agenda of the War Council and, in general, about the Nonpareil Soldiery.

'That is good. We have to wait for another twelve Mex,' Ralf said.

'And my election is just around the corner. In another Mex time, I am going to face the election. I am not worried about Ivish. That constituency I will win for sure, but it is about winning the Supreme Council's election.'

'Sir, your Nadus strategy has worked perfectly. You will surely win.' General Viz supplicated.

'Thanks, Viz.'

'If I may recount the events of the past period.' Viz said, trying to prove that he was the true loyalist.

'The terrorist FREE-ME is exposed, and Nonpareil Soldiery has taken Nadus back into the Xorian domain. You have made Nadus again a territory where your puppet Governor Tuga is running the show. You have shown your big heart by allowing the Magathian, Dhartal, and other provinces to take over the local administration. You have allowed them to play Cress freely. The lowly dunderheads just became content with that, it seems.'

'Right.' Ralf said with pride. He was enjoying the great accomplishment of his master stroke.

Viz continued. 'Also, your big heart strategy of paying a pension of 100,000 Rumini to each family for the next ten Nadus years has worked brilliantly. Everyone in Nadus has become your fan. Even your detractors cannot say anything against you now.'

'Best part is this money is funded by imposing a tax on corporate mining at Khart.' Ralf added.

'Yes, Sire.' Viz said. He continued, 'Suddenly, by these measures, you have come across as a statesman. The terrorist activity also is under control. Your adversaries, Shini and Dell, are silenced. Shini committed suicide, and thus it is proven that Sur was funding the FREE-ME movement. Also, now in Sur, it is again your friendly party in power; it is Governor Russi-Ja. She is very much your supporter, and thus your chances of winning the Supreme Commander Chair are very much on. Dell couldn't answer why he failed to stop the attack on Xor. Local security was his scope of work. Overall, your master plan has worked. You are indeed a genius. At one stage, it

looked like everything was going against you, but at the last moment, DD came with such proof which shook the public's conscience.'

'Thanks, General Viz. But this has not ensured that I will win the next election. Because Dell is still there. He has the support of around fifty members. Remember, he is the Governor of Xor. Xor is the mother planet. Don't underestimate Dell. He needs to be silenced.'

'Ok, but what is in your mind, Sir.'

'Will tell you.'

Ralf gave the mental command to a white humanoid assistant who was always there with Ralf, and immediately it connected Ralf with DD. Ralf and Viz both could see DD.

'Hi, DD. You have done a great job. Now I need you to do another job.'

'Another press conference. I understood.' DD cut the communication.

Viz was confused.

'Sir, did DD understand what you wanted.'

'This is the difference between a trusted ally and a partner. You are a trusted ally Viz, but DD is a partner in crime.'

'I didn't get it.'

'You don't bother. DD understood, and soon you will see the results. Let's proceed with the War Council discussion.'

Viz and Ralf entered the iridescent room where all the relevant people were present.

'Welcome all. The great news is our Savitra65 have reached almost half of their destination without any difficulty. Jason is commanding them well and sending us the signals. Though, as the distance increases, we will receive the signals with delay. But no news shall be considered as good news.' General Viz briefed all the members of the War Council.

'That is wonderful news. But don't you think we should hire the Indpro once and send a few of our AGI-powered humanoids near the Uco Wormhole so they can be there in case any help is required? We can send the AGIs without raising any suspicion as we can say this is to research on deep cosmos or researching the wormhole.' Juvon put across his point of view.

'I think Juvon has a point. Because now the distance is huge. We will not know on a real-time basis about the Savitra65. We can have a few highly advanced humanoid AGI robots to help the mission.' Ralf suggested.

'But sir, this will cost us huge. We are on a very tight budget.' The Finance Controller said.

'See, now it is certain that I may win another term as Supreme Commander, and it is a matter of few Mex; what I will do, I will use my special powers and sanction a budget of a hundred million Tyc for a secret project. Governing Council meets every ten Mex (forty Earth years) unless an emergency meeting is called. For ten Mex, I don't have to give an account to anyone. Before that, I shall again be made Supreme Commander. In that term, I shall see how to justify this. But your cash flow issues would be served.' Ralf was ready to even take charge of financial embezzlement on his head for the Eritrean mission.

'But Ralf, this is a very risky proposition.' Nish cautioned. Given that political sensitivity is also important, Ralf invited Nish too to the War Council. Nish continued, 'What if because of any reason you were not elected as Supreme Commander, then transferring such huge money for an unknown mission would be seen that you have swindled the money. Further, presuming you come back to power too, but still, in the first meeting, the Governing Council will ask you to give accounts. That time how will you justify a hundred million Tyc. From where you will adjust this. That Governing Council will think that you have swindled money, and it would be a ground for impeachment. God forbid, but if before the election, there is an emergency meeting or if someone has leaked that such a huge amount is transferred to unknown sources, you may be impeached now. Your political condition is still not very overboard. People still suspect you. Though the blame has shifted on Shini of Sur, I feel this is a huge risk.'

'Nish, I hear you. I understand the risk. But sending the humanoid AGIs to the aid of Jason is also important. We cannot let this mission fail because of money. I have given it everything. The plus side is if we are successful, we will have a huge supply of Antium, the only material not allowing us to produce mass-scale Indpros. See if I can produce Indpros in huge numbers. I don't need any dependence on Merkels. I can challenge them, and that upside deserves all risk. I am going ahead with this. Finance Controller note it.'

'This is breaking news. With us again, we have DD, and this time he has another big and sensational disclosure.' The scribe was ecstatic. The media houses had struck gold in the past period. It seemed so much adventure was happening around the corner.

'Thanks for having me. People think FREE-ME is dead, and also the movement. But no, this is untrue. Maybe Nadus is captured again by the efforts of Ralf's administration, but FREE-ME is still funded, and I have credible news that FREE-ME is going to attack the Xorian Empire again.'

'What are your sources?' the scribe asked.

'I cannot tell the sources as yet. But I will soon be with sting operation clips, as I showed you before. I bet that Governor Dell is in talks with FREE-ME. And let me show you a small clipping of the discussion between Dell and Shini just sometime before Shini's suicide.'

*'Agreed. I am ready to shell lots of money, but I want Ralf to be isolated.'* Dell was shown telepathizing with Shini.

'Now, if I may ask, this money which Governor Dell is ready to spend is he indicating he is funding the terrorist. And why is he using taxpayers' money for his personal benefit.' DD was trying to seed thoughts in the mind of the public at large. Shini was now an abhorred character. Dell was in conversation with her and was ready to spend lots of money. DD indicated that it was Dell and Shini who were funding the terrorists.

'This stems from the fact that mother planet Xor itself was subject to terrorist attack. This is unprecedented. And let me remind you all that except at the time of the Xor-Merkel war, Xor was never ever attacked this brutally, neither at the time of Solar Civil War or War of Glory, leave alone the question of an attack on Nodol, the business and financial capital. Further, Merkels attacking Xor is different, but few rookies armed Nadusians attacking the mighty Xor is unfathomable, and this indicates some inside connection.' DD concluded.

'To clarify his point, we have Governor Dell with us,' the scribe connected with Governor Dell. Though Dell was not used to giving appointments this fast, as his credibility was under attack, he had no option but to defend it.

'What nonsense allegation this DD is levelling. I shall be suing him for criminal defamation.' Dell was agitated from the word go.

'Let me ask a simple question to Governor Dell. Was he in close contact with Shini or not?' DD counter-questioned.

'Even if I was, what does it prove.' Dell responded angrily.

'Sir, it simply means you were in touch with someone who has funded the terrorist a million Tyc.' DD retorted.

'But then she was a Governor of Sur. I am the Governor of Xor. Aint we discuss business dealings between Sur and Xor.' Dell was furious.

'Of course. But tell me which is the major project for which you had a discussion with Shini that requires huge money outgo. If we simply make the deduction, it is clear Shini was funding the terrorist FREE-ME to destabilize the Empire so that Ralf can be discarded as a Supreme Commander, and then you also decided to help her. Because a huge amount of money was required to fund such a terrorist organization. Sur being a small player, cannot shell that much money, one million Tyc itself was an enormous hit for it, but Xor is a rich place, and for you, even shelling ten million Tyc is not that difficult. The things are apparently clear that you were talking to fund the terrorist.' DD had pushed Governor Dell to the corner. The entire Empire where the telecast reached was glued to their screens.

'These are mere conjectures.' Dell defended.

'But who knows the conjectures may be true.' DD was successful, at least in creating enough doubt in the mind of the public, that Dell may be a culprit here. Dell found that now it would be difficult to win his own constituency again. The election was around the corner, and politics in its dirtiest form was writ large.

Ralf, Juvon and Nish were celebrating in the private chamber of Ralf. The droid servants were serving the drinks and food, suiting the taste and preference of the three powerful persons in the Empire. Juvon got up from his comfortable cushioned seat.

'It calls for a huge celebration Ralf.' Juvon was excited. 'The results are out, and you are again the Supreme Commander of the mighty Xorian Empire for another Tym. It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate you twice in such a short time, first for becoming the Governor of Ivish again and now for being the Supreme Lord second consecutive time.'

'Thanks, Juvon. As long as I have trusted supporters like you, I am destined to win.'

'Congratulations. But if I analyze it deeply, you got a hit.' Nish intervened. She knew that Ralf would not like to hear this criticism. But it was her duty.

Ralf did not intervene and let Nish complete her monologue. He was uncharacteristically listening with intent.

Nish continued, 'If I see the voting patterns in relation to the three major Political Divisions, the Cerebral, the Luminous and the Sonic, your popularity has got a dent.'

Nish telepathized the numbers to Ralf and Jovon.

| | Current Elections | | Last Election 1 Tym back | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Voting Points** | **%age** | **Voting Points** | **%age** |
| **Sonic** | **129** | **20%** | **130** | **20%** |
| **Luminous** | **227** | **35%** | **162** | **25%** |
| **Cerebral** | **292** | **45%** | **356** | **55%** |
| | **648** | **100%** | **648** | **100%** |
| The victorious party has the right to choose one of the winning Governors as the Supreme Commander of the Xorian Empire. | | | | |

So, I have a worry. Last time the difference between Luminous, Governor Dell's party and our Cerebral was 30%, but it is only 10% this time. Do you see my point?' Nish telepathized to both Juvon and Ralf.

'Nish, you are too pessimistic. Juvon, what is your opinion.' Ralf was irritated.

'But Nish, the endpoint is Ralf got 292 voting points and that stupid Dell's party only 227. This calls for celebration.' Juvon added.

'No, I am only saying we are in the dicey territory. We have lost 10% of our popularity, which has all been captured by Luminous. Therefore, we should be cautious.' Nish added a word of caution.

'Cut it, Nish. I have to attend the Governing Council meeting shortly. I need to prepare a lot.' Ralf ended the conversation and left for another room.

Ralf was disturbed at the stroke of midnight. He was peacefully sleeping alongside his wife, and his small child was sleeping in between. The call which telepathized directly to Ralf by the droid presenting itself in the room, disturbing the privacy and sleep of the great lord of the Empire.

'Sir, sorry to bother you at this hour. There is a huge attack on Parinjay, and it has been captured by the terrorist FREE-ME.' Chief Marshal of the Nonpareil Soldiery informed Ralf.

'What? These terrorists have become so outrageous.' Ralf responded.

'They are committing widespread massacre there. We need to act soon.' Chief Marshal stated.

*What is wrong with this, FREE-ME? I told him to attack Bobro first. Parinjay should only be collateral damage. But this dunderhead has attacked Parinjay, and not only attack, but he is also causing brutalities on Acrimean. I now have no option but to ensure that this terrorist dies at the hand of Nonpareil Soldiery.* Ralf went into deep thought.

'Ok. You have my permission to use as much force as required.' Ralf responded.

'Sir, there is one more troubling news.'

'What?'

'We have done our forensic, and the weaponry used by the FREE-ME terrorists is mostly manufactured in Ivish. This means someone in Ivish is directly involved. We are doing the investigation. I shall report you in detail soon.' Chief Marshal disconnected the communicator.

This was troubling news for Ralf. The imperium election was over now, FREE-ME had served its purpose, and this terrorist had become a huge threat. If the Ivish connection was established, the blame would come directly to him. He was the Governor of Ivish, along with being the Supreme Commander. This was common knowledge that nothing happens on Ivish without Ralf's permission. Even the weapon traders first take permission from Ralf. They would not supply goods, even at windfall profits, to a terrorist if Ralf had not given the go-ahead. Ralf was now getting trapped in his own web.

Ralf looked at the small child. The newborn was sleeping peacefully, clutching his mother's fingers. Ralf could not lose this. His reputation, his family's security, and, most importantly Xorian Empire's future were dependent upon his actions. He had to be successful.

Ralf immediately gave the mental command to the white humanoid droid to connect to the Ivish trader. It was daytime at Ivish, the moon of Outer Boy planet. The time when the traders were extremely busy in their routine life.

'Sir, everything alright. You never touch base with us.' Ivish weapon manufacturer's leader was shocked to note that Ralf, the Supreme Commander, had communicated directly on his coordinates.

'We have a situation at hand. Did you give FREE-ME the weapons directly?'

'Yes, sir. But it was under your command.'

'Can they be forensically traced to you.'

'Yes, sir. They surely can be, with the latest technique.'

Ralf disconnected the connection. He was surely in trouble. His next call was to his aide DD.

'This is interesting. Now Ralf is caught in his own lies.' Dharma said.

'Yes. But now the problem is he has to face the Governing Council and has no answers to many questions.' Tara telepathized.

'Yes. First, where has the hundred million Tyc gone? What is this secret mission? How the Ivish weapon traders giving weaponry to FREE-ME.' Dharma answered.

'Very true, Dharma. Mostly now, Ralf is on a sticky wicket. He is now losing his popularity.'

'But the Eritrean mission is still very far. If I recall correctly, it will take almost 25–26 Mex for the Savitra65 to reach Eritrea, passing through Uco Wormhole. And only 11–12 Mex have passed till now, and already Ralf is finding it difficult to hold on to his Supreme Commander's chair. Though he has been re-elected, this will give him enough cushion. Impeachment would not be that easy. Because if my memory serves me right, 300 council members need to affirm.'

'Yes, Dharma. To impeach, there should be a minimum of 300 members to initiate the motion and 2/3rd voting rights, i.e. 432 out of 648 voting points to impeach. There are 292 planets whose total voting rights are 492, as Xor has ten voting points. But they cannot impeach despite having more than 432 points. Likewise, all moons, asteroids and a few planets join to make the number 300; they cannot impeach if their total is not 432.'

'What happened to Parinjay?' Dharma asked curiously.

Tara telepathized the story to Dharma. Who was now settled in the comfortable chair? Boro, Zoro, and Laura all were in different rooms, busy with their routine.

'Sir, we have gained control of the Parinjay. The terrorists are out. We have destroyed their Crusader starship. But it seems the leader FREE-ME has escaped.' The Chief Marshal reported to Ralf.

'Great job. I shall soon visit Parinjay.'

Ralf ended the communication and straight away went for the meeting room where he was to meet the Governing Council. They all had to take the oath of allegiance to the Xorian Empire.

'The proceeding of this great august house to start. This is the 26th Governing Council per the new constitution, and let me announce the names of the Hon'ble members.' The Chief Election Commissioner whose duty it was to conduct all the elections freely in the Empire and then to administer the oath to the members of Governing Councils. This new system of a freely democratic Governing Council started post Floraman Kontana and Agami's initiatives.

One by one, all members had taken the Oath of Allegiance. The proceeding of the Governing Council was declared to commence by the Chief Election Commissioner. He and his team left the house post declaring the commencement as was customary.

'My first question to Supreme Commander Lord Ralf is why the Savitra65 ships are moving in unchartered territory. There are confirmed reports of even hiring Indpros to send some humanoid AGIs in that direction. Why are we burning so much money there? Whether permission of Governing Council was taken.' Dell was fresh with the memory of DD's ravaging his reputation some time back. Still, Dell managed to get the Governorship of Xor. Now he was hell-bent on getting even with Ralf. He had spent enormous energy and time gathering loopholes in Ralf's previous stint.

'This is a mission for finding new material. Don't worry about the money. I shall be presenting the budget and accounts before this august house in the next meeting.' Ralf responded.

'Why next meeting? These expenses belong to your previous stint at the 25th Governing Council. The accounts should be ready and, I guess, audited too. You can present us with the same right now.' Dell was pushing Ralf to the corner.

'I am not prepared.' Ralf casually answered.

'Then either it is incompetence or dishonesty.' Dell was blunt and grinning portentously.

'It is neither. I was not prepared because this was the first meeting of Governing Council.' Ralf was uncomfortable in responding to the question.

Other members were also getting the hint that Ralf was hiding something.

'Ok, if our Supreme Commander is not comfortable answering about the Savitra65 and the Indpro trip to unchartered territory, I believe he is comfortable in responding to the question of FREE-Me. The planet Parinjay was devastated. The FREE-ME terrorist used Crusader starships and ultra-modern weaponry whose links are getting established to Ivish. Chief Marshal of Nonpareil Soldiery can be summoned before this Governing Council to answer the questions on this.' Dell was prepared and wanted to destroy Ralf.

'Well, the forensic is going on. The final report is not out yet; Ivish alone cannot be blamed unless that comes. I am also finding out who the culprit is. As regards FREE-ME, our great Nonpareil Soldiery has destroyed them, and Parinjay is liberated. I received the update from Chief Marshal just before this meeting.'

'Ok. Well then …' Dell was about to hit Ralf with another arrow, but before he could shoot his query, Ralf intervened.

'As Lord Dell has raised the topic of Parinjay, so let me tell this august house my plan of recompense. I propose to create a gigantic megastructure that completely encompasses the star Acra, captures a large percentage of its power output, and gives the energy to Parinjay for its development.'

'But Hon'ble Supreme Commander, don't you think it would be duplicitous for Volsotovok and Bobro.' Treta, the Military Chief of Bobro, intervened. 'Let me show a simpler vision of the Acra stellar systems.'

He telepathized a vision seen by all.[7]

'It can be easily seen that Volsotovok is the biggest planet and needs the maximum energy. If the majority of Acra's energy were diverted to Parinjay, it would be trampling the rights of others.' Treta, the Military Chief of Bobro, immediately objected. This political shift Nish was talking about. Treta, who in the 25th Governing Council used to support Ralf, had shifted allegiance.

'General Treta, this mega-structure would help all three planets. The energy initially will be given to Parinjay in larger proportion to help it recover from the devastation it has suffered, and soon this energy will help Bobro and Volsotovok. Right now, the majority of Acra's energy is wasted, and a very little portion is used by any of the planets.' Ralf responded.

The Governing Council, despite the toxicity, supported Ralf. Though Ralf was cautioned that in the next meeting, he must present the budget

[7] Refer Annexure 8.

and account. Ralf now had ten Mex's time (forty years Earth standards) to ensure that he got Eritrea and, in the next meeting, came out as a winner. Also, he had ten Mex's time to get rid of FREE-ME. The purpose of FREE-ME was over. Ralf didn't need him anymore.



'So finally, Ralf somehow managed to stay.' Dharma said while squirming in his chair. He stood up and started pacing towards the window. He didn't realize that the sun had set and it was dusky. A lot of time had passed since Dharma was engaged in his intriguing story.

'It so appeared only. But the entire Governing Council was sure that Ralf was not kosher. Because of the connection of Ivish weaponry, account not being present, sending Savitra65 to unchartered territory sending humanoid AGI by leasing Indpro, all are enough to give suspicion. Ralf, at that time, did not know, but the Governing Council did not give ten Mex (forty Earth years) time to him but to themselves to come up with concrete evidence to impeach Ralf. They wanted to have the sadistic pleasure of impeaching an Acrimean leader.'

'Oh. Despite being on top of his game, Ralf somehow lost the plot. I feel pity for him.'

'Don't Dharma. He was our enemy and likewise Nokoevid. You should have no empathy for them.'

'Ok, *didi*. I will keep it in mind.'

'We need to leave planet Mazol. There is bad news.' Zoro suddenly came in, and Laura and Professor Boro followed him.

'What happened?' Tara asked.

'The spy who spotted us somehow has told this to Dias, and a huge fleet of the army is coming to get us.' Laura responded. 'I was with him, and I was just decoding the cryptic messages that I received as to what they were up to. I finally decrypted everything, and it seems an army is going to attack us here. Though Mazol is naturally safe, we must rush to some other planet.' Laura hurriedly telepathized.

'But how can we move to another planet in a jiffy.' Dharma was perplexed.

'We can Dharma.' Boro intervened. 'We have a starship 'Janak 290' with Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta Propellers.

'Sire, we have limited Maen Janak 290 that could push us to a max distance of ten Tymlight (1000 light years).' Zoro intervened.

'But if we exhaust it to run away, what will we do. I presume our enemies also have many such Janak 290 ships. They will simply wait for your Maen or Tachyons to run out and will catch hold of you. This is no solution.' Dharma replied. He was looking calm but holding a storm of emotions inside.

'So, son of God, do you have a better solution.' Boro was frustrated.

'I don't have it yet. But how much time do we have at hand.' Dharma enquired.

'My Lord, if from Eritrea the troops are coming, they may take a Franc's (two Earth months) time, and if they are coming from Xor, it would take …' Zoro responded but was cut short in between by Dharma.

'They will come from Eritrea, Zoro.' Dharma said.

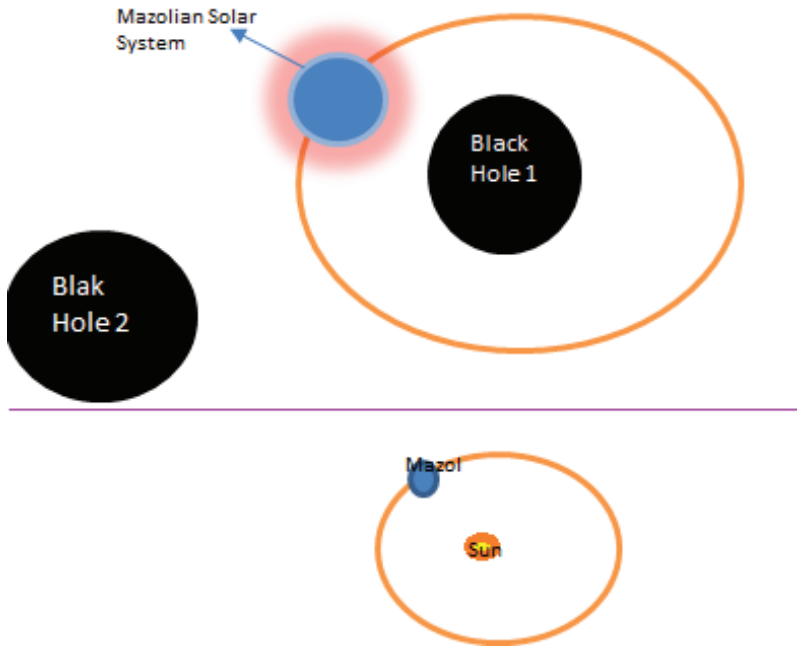
'How are you so sure?' Boro quizzed Dharma.

'Simple. If I am Nokoevid and want to kill my enemy, why will I give him so much more time? I will try to reach as early as possible and kill him.'

'You are smart, Dharma.' Boro praised him again.

'A Franc's time is good for you people, but I am still bogged down with my Earth's standard. I know Franc means two months of Earth standard, but for Mazol, how much does it correspond to.'

'My Lord, the Mazolian stellar system is a single sun system, but it is between two massive black holes. Let me show you the vision.



The Sun of Mazol's stellar system revolves around the massive Black hole 1. The two Black holes revolve around each other. This revolution of the sun around a black hole takes one Tym time, i.e. a hundred Earth years, and Mazol revolves around its sun in five Mex, i.e. twenty Earth years. Mazol rotates around its Sun at a Mex time, i.e. four Earth years. This time is further divided into sun parts which you can call hours. One full day is divided into forty-eight sun parts, and in one sun part, the planet rotates around 7.5 degrees with respect to Sun.'

'Cut the crap, Zoro. You have no idea how to explain things. One Franc time means just two Sun parts or two hours here at Mazol. So in two hours, Mazol time, the forces will be around us.' Boro was seemingly very frustrated.

'What is the population of Mazol? I remember Mazol is divided into many countries' Dharma asked.

'My Lord, around 300 million,' Zoro responded.

'All are Muksa'. Dharma further asked.

'Yes, sir.' Zoro was polite.

'Is it someway possible that we intermingle with the population and disguise ourselves as Muksa.' Dharma asked.

'No. You can't disguise yourself. Don't think your picabot dress can do magic. I know you got two sets of dresses, but the Nonpareil Soldiery carry IP-detector. They may identify us.' Laura responded.

'Can you guide me on how this detector works.' Dharma was making some plans. He, indeed, was behaving as a leader. Tara was mesmerized. Bof predicted that Dharma would be taking the lead. Tara now believed that Dharma was going to liberate them from the evil rule. She couldn't believe that even at times she doubted Bof, whatever was written in Bof was somehow coming to life.

'It tests the atmospheric air. See, each and every IP-1 and above life transmit a certain amount of pheromones. The sensitive devices will catch it up and find out where such pheromones are in the atmosphere. They are highly sophisticated.' Boro responded.

'But can't we rub some kind of shrubs available here in Mazol on our body and game the system.'

'No Dharma. Your humanly small tricks won't work. These are highly sophisticated equipment.' Tara responded.

'Do you think the Supporter can help us? I have learnt they are planning to assassinate Governor Kor.' Laura intervened.

'No. The Supporters are primarily in Eritrea.' Boro responded.

'Do you know who these Supporters are?' Laura quizzed.

'I have some idea. They are my students from Louve University. They follow me through virtual platforms. They are all races, whether Acquians, Fleshy, Centaur or Angelan. They also want to free Eritrea from the evil rule of Xor. They, however, don't believe in holy Bof. But we all do. We can have our different interpretations of Bof, but we all believe in its sanctity. We follow it. Thus, we are Believers, and they help us; thus, they are Supporters.'

'Ok. I don't know whether they are going to succeed or not. But hopefully, they do.'

'Laura. Whether Supporters assassinate Kor or not is not our worry, our worry is the approaching army. They will soon come to Mazol, and the first place where they will go is the city of Wen, from where they have received the last signal. Then they will use their IP sensors and soon know that 6–7 non-Muksa pheromones are secreted in Satrap, and soon they would be here.' Boro was clearly visualizing the event as they would be going to unfold.

'How many soldiers are there in the army?' Dharma asked curiously.

'We can't say with certainty. We don't know which Fleet they have ordered. One thing is sure they have ordered troops through Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta propelled star ships with Maen circle helping create the Time Wrap Bubble. There are different space crafts, but a typical craft may carry 20–25 Armoured IP-2+ soldiers.'

'Ok. What is IP-2? I guess this is for denoting the level of intelligence of life.'

'Yes, Dharma. IP-2 life forms mean intelligent being like humans on Earth. Mazolians are IP-2. Nadusians are IP-2. Primarily IP-2 means those who are not yet evolved to such a level to understand the inter-stellar way of life. IP-3 are inter-stellar species like Xorians and Merkels. Thyzer is IP-4, and Ether is IP-5,' Laura explained.

'Ok. So IP-2 are those who have evolved to live on one planet, and IP-3 are those who have evolved to live on different planets, moon etc.,' Dharma said.

'Yes, Dharma. So as I said before Intelli-Parameter is not only to judge the planets or moons, but it refers to a specific race.' Tara added.

'Ok. So when you say there may be 20–25 Armoured IP2+ soldiers, it means natural beings like Namuhian.' Dharma said.

'Yes. When we are not sure, we say IP2+. This indicates it may have Xorian who are accustomed to inter-stellar life and may be few who are not so used to.' Boro further added to the conversation.

'But don't you think they are sending just twenty-five soldiers? What if the entire Mazolian decides to support us?' Dharma was curious.

'Mazolians do support us. If need be, we can gather a large army of Mazolians. Almost all the countries' heads are aligned with us.'

'Then what is the problem.' Dharma asked.

'This army of Mazolians is no match to even one Nonpareil Soldier. Their armoured suits are impenetrable by any weapon that Mazolian has. We possess few highly sophisticated weapons but are not as well trained as a Nonpareil Soldier.' Boro responded.

'More so, their gamma rays, high graviton guns, lasers, solar radiation cannons etc., which they shoot from the flat of their palms, are devastating. If need be, an individual soldier can also shoot energy bursts which will create so much destruction as is done by a nuclear bomb.' Tara telepathized to conclude what Boro was alluding to.

'Oh. We have to fight twenty-five Supermen.' Dharma mockingly said.

'Yes. And each one can fight an entire army of Mazolian provinces. Further, these 20–25, we are guessing, are natural soldiers. We don't know how many bionic or AGI soldiers are there. Even if there are 15–20 such soldiers, they can easily take over the entire planet of Mazol. They don't have a fear of death. Plus, they have sophisticated weaponry. They may soon find out that we are here at this place. They can simply fly to this place and either arrest us or kill us, dependent upon the instruction received. We can't do anything. With our limited weapons, we cannot stand even for a small fraction of time.' Tara was fearful.

'Understood. But what Zoro said earlier is that this planet is between two binary black holes. Though little do I know that black holes don't even emit gravitons, so I don't know how the binary works. But presuming the black holes have distorted the space-time, won't that have any impact on the space shuttles.'

'Good question. But it is difficult to answer. The HTM propellers covered under the Maen drive would push the shuttles faster and quicker, and I don't think the black holes would pose any difficulty, except that they have to take a bigger curve crossing the black hole, which may cause a slight delay in them reaching here.' Boro answered while leaving with Zoro to work on their spaceship and escape from Mazol.

'Interesting.' Dharma thought.

Dharma thought it was time to visit Mazol and at least learn about the planet. He had no job with the gathering now. After a thoughtful pause, Dharma said, 'I want to go out and meet the Mazolian. I want to interact with them.'

'Okay. You can go.' Boro, first time without protest, allowed Dharma to go. 'We will take some time to get the launch pad and Janak 290 ready. The good thing is Janak 290 is in Satrap. Otherwise, we would have lost precious time.'

'I will come with you.' Laura said.

Boro, Tara and Zoro got busy setting up Janak 290. Boro was trying to send messages to his supporters across maybe to ensure that in case he was caught today, what they had to do. Dharma and Laura took a stroll outside, and soon they reached some kind of market in that small city.

'Tell me one thing, Laura, how come you are in Mazol.'

'I am here as part of the spy team of Dias. Though I came here with Boro.'

'Since how long you had known Boro and Zoro.'

'Very long. I was a spy and part of Nonpareil Soldiery. My role was to understand the ground reality of the planet of Eritrea and report to the bosses in Nonpareil Soldiery. I was part of the spy team, and our role was to ensure we could find out the main cause of the rebellion.'

'Interesting. So you switched loyalties.' Dharma wondered.

Laura continued, 'See, after the Eritrean capture, some rebels wanted to free it from Xorian Empire. These local groups were ambushing and attacking. Though I was doing a great job, somehow, I was captured by Eritrean rebels. They wanted to kill me, but Boro, instead of killing or torturing me, showed me the true path.'

'Oh, so Boro kind of saved you despite you being his adversary.'

'Ya kind of.' Laura posited.

'That made you change your mind. But then, how come you were with Jolly–the enemy spy.' Dharma questioned.

'Eritrean rebels could not hold on for long, and ultimately, it was crushed. Boro had to run away to Mazol, and I accompanied him at that time. This is his friendly territory.'

'I was asking how you were with Jolly.'

'I am coming to it.' Laura telepathized. Both were strolling on the mud-path towards the city.

Laura continued, 'Jolly and his team of spy was given the task of tracing out Boro as Boro was running a successful campaign against the Xorian rule. When Boro came to know that Jolly and I were together in the training school, he asked me to join Jolly.'

'Oh, so you joined him back.' Dharma could decipher the twist and turns of this double agent.

'Jolly was a brilliant spy, and he found out where Boro was hiding in Eritrea at that time. He and the Nonpareil Soldiery attacked and apprehended many, including me. Boro fled away. Joly remembered I was part of Dias's spy network and his college friend. I told Jolly I was not interested in bloodshed. I was officially recorded as dead. So I convinced Jolly to be with him. He agreed. He knew that I was earlier working for the Nonpareil Soldiery, so he never suspected me. He somehow traced Boro in Mazol. I insisted and came with Jolly to Mazol. I used to pass on all the information to Boro.'

'Interesting. But why you didn't tell Boro that such a huge army is going to get him.'

'Jolly used to interact with his network through telepathic messages but in cryptic form. For outsiders, even for his girlfriend, it is a secret. I stored all the communication and then decrypted it. As soon as I could do that, I told Boro.'

'Ok. Let's go to the inner market, where we can interact with the crowd. I believe you can read mental waves so you can communicate with Mazolians.'

'Yes, I can. Soon you will also be perfect in the art of telepathic communication.' Laura telepathized to Dharma.

'But do Mazolians, too, communicate through mental waves.' Dharma questioned.

'No. They speak through the vocal cord. But we can interact with them through telepathy.'

'While walking towards the inner city, can you explain to me about this planet Mazol and the country where we are in?' Dharma enquired while walking from the outskirts of a city to the main city. Dharma can feel that this planet has a similar amount of gravity and has a full-lit day. The air seems fresh. Maybe because the outskirts where they were situated had lots of trees. The fauna and flora were similar to Earth. Despite this planet being so near black holes, it was developed well. It had a good amount of greenery, at least in the part where Dharma at present was.

'This planet Mazol has many species of life like Earth. It also has reptiles, mammals, sea creatures, fishes, birds, animals, vertebrates, invertebrates and all different kinds of life forms. The most intelligent among them, which classify for IP-2 life, is Muksa. They can be called a hybrid of humans and snakes by Earth's standards.'

'You all seem to know a lot about my planet, Earth.'

'Haha. No Dharma. I got to learn it from Zoro while we were on a journey. I don't know much, but very basic what I am being told. I have to give you a comparison with Earth. Otherwise, you would not be in a position to visualize.'

'Ok. Agreed. So Muksa is one of the intelligent life forms here. A hybrid of human and snake?'

'Well. Muksa believes that they have born from some shape-shifter snakes who were their predecessors. Later they lost the art of shape-shifting, and now they are stuck in human form. But they have a poison gland in them; they have a forked tongue. They have the capability of stretching, and their organ adapts to such shifting. They can stretch 9–10 feet.'

'Shapeshifter snakes. We on Earth have few who believe in them, though.'

'But it seems that this is a folly. What might have happened is sometime back the humans have had a genetic change due to certain reasons which have resulted in this intelligent form.'

'Or Mutochthons wanted so.' Dharma said curiously.

'You know about them. It is definitely possible that Mutochthons have tried some experiments, and the seeds have turned out to be such. Or maybe because the radiation or the effect of nearby such black holes might have distorted the evolutions. Here even, there are snakes which are as big as humans on Earth. Few snakes fly. This basically is a land where snakes dominate.'

Laura and Dharma didn't realize that while talking to each other, they had reached the inner market of the city of Chug, which is a small city even by Mazolian standards. Satrap was a monarchy governed by King Sadhu. Chug was a small city where the administrative head was Sankara. Dharma and Laura were in the middle of the city in some street marketplace. Dharma was trying to understand these people, 'Muksa.' They have a strange structure. The body colour was green, average Muksa was around five feet three inches tall. They were wearing a wrap below the waist similar to a *lungi*, and on top, they had some kind of stole. The hair is black, and the eyes are blue. They have a forked tongue, and it seems they can stretch to around 10–12 feet. Otherwise, they were human-like with

two legs, two hands and, two eyes, two ears. The city reminded Dharma of old Indian cities with a simple life. The policeman, or the 'Chaukidars' as they call them, have old-type guns.

Dharma saw one small Muksa boy committing theft and running away with a Chowkidar running behind him. Dharma gestured to Laura and said, 'We need to run behind that boy and Chowkidar'. Dharma and Laura started tailing the thief boy and the Chowkidar, who was running and wielding a gun.

Boy was caught by the Chowkidar after a small chase. Chowkidar found just some fruits and bread from the boy. It seems he had been hungry for days, and thus he stole this. Chowkidar was about to beat the boy, but Dharma intervened and held his hand. The Chowkidar got furious. He said something and then flickered his tongue. Dharma thought that he was going to spew some kind of venom, so he gave him a karate chop and the Chowkidar fell down unconsciously. Dharma took the bread and fruits and handed them over to the thief boy.

'Why are you getting in their mess?' Laura telepathized to Dharma.

'I can't help. The boy was hungry. Do you have a local currency?'

'Yes. It is called Rup. Here this is 10,000 Rup.'

Dharma went to the shop where the boy stole the bread and fruit and gestured to tell the amount for the bread and fruit. The shopkeeper showed fourteen through the six fingers and a thumb each in both hands. Shopkeeper could see Dharma carrying the notes in his hands. The shopkeeper counted fourteen notes of one hundred Rup each snatching them from the hands of Dharma. Dharma then went to Chowkidar, who was still unconscious. Dharma got some water and pour over him. The Chowkidar came to life. Chowkidar ran away once he gained consciousness.

Dharma and Laura started roaming around when they saw some 8–10 Chowkidars coming their way. They arrested Dharma and Laura and took them to chief Sankara.

Sankara was a tall green man with a skinny body. He was sitting on a large pedestal. In his court, his sepoys were holding spears in hand. Sankara was listening to the prosecutor who was there telling the story.

'Sankara is saying to punish both of us with a death sentence, as we are aliens, and we helped the thief and attack the soldier.' Laura read the mental waves of Sankara and told Dharma.

'If you could read the mental waves, why didn't you read it earlier. We would have run away.' Dharma said.

'What is the use? You like to get in trouble. But I can save you.'

'Then what are you waiting for. Save me.'

'What will I get?'

'What nonsense? I cannot give you anything.'

'I need one thing from you.'

'What?'

'A promise.'

'Promise?' Dharma was utterly surprised.

'Yes. Do not change. You are a fantastic person. You truly are the son of God.' Laura was mesmerized by the personality of Dharma. She had come to know how Dharma saved her life by putting his own life in danger.

'Thanks. I can promise that.'

'Then see the drama.'

'Do you know who he is? He is the son of God mentioned in Bof, the incarnation of Lord Siv.' Laura telepathized Sankara and also Dharma. 'He is here to judge you. If you don't free him immediately, your entire city will be doomed.'

Sankara was confused. He had never experienced someone telepathizing. He was a small person whose life was this township. But still, he had learnt not to trust anything blindly. He said in his language, which Laura read through his mental waves, 'If he is Lord Siv, why does he get caught so easily. Lord Siv is all-powerful.'

'You will regret this. I gave you a chance.' Laura telepathized.

Laura had a minigun in her bracelet, and she gave a mental command to the gun. A huge burst of lesser-frequency waves hit the room where they were standing, and it started burning.

'You have made the Lord angry. First, your home will be burnt to ashes, and then this village.' Laura telepathized to Sankara.

Sankara was a simple guy, and this was enough to make him believe it was God incarnate. He immediately was on his knee, bowing to Dharma pleading mercy with his forked tongue.

Sankara called his people, and they all started treating Dharma as a God.

Laura winked at Dharma as if saying remember your promise.



'Our starship is ready.' Boro telepathized to Zoro. 'You call Dharma and Laura.'

'Ok, Sir. I will immediately message Laura. I have her coordinate.'

In a few moments, Dharma and Laura were back. Boro, Tara and Zoro couldn't believe what they were seeing. Dharma and Laura were carried on some big wooden basket hand-made by the Muksa, and many were behind them singing some kind of eulogy for their God. It seemed Dharma was completely drenched with some kind of admixture. He was worshipped a lot. Dharma was adorned with a crown of leaves, lots of flowers and lots of different types of spices were applied to him. Likewise, Laura also was worshipped. All were at their wit's end as to what had transpired.

Dharma and Laura went inside, but the Muksa crowd were sitting outside. Soon the crowd was increasing as everyone wanted a glimpse of their God.

'What the hell has happened?' Boro was irate.

'It is not important. But I feel that you all should apply these on your body with immediate effect.' Dharma gave them different spices. 'Once you apply this, we all will get bathed in the water of river Jung which flows here nearby.'

'We have to immediately leave this planet. The Nonpareil Soldiery is on its way.' Boro telepathized. His facial scowl was such as if saying what this stupid boy was up to.

'No. We will wait for them here.' Dharma was firm.

'Are you at your wits end?' Boro was now totally out of his mind.

'Professor Boro, I don't know whether I will make sense to you. Your plan of leaving is a short-term plan. My plan is to defeat the Nonpareil Soldiery.'

'Do you think you are really the son of God or the incarnate of Lord Siv?' Boro was sarcastic.

'No. But I know I can save all of you and teach the Nokoevid his first lesson.' Dharma was very confident.

'And my request to all of you is to apply these herbs and bushes and bathe in river Jung. Post that, Tara can continue with the story till we await the Nonpareil Soldiery.'

Everybody is stunned by the kind of confidence this young chap from the Earth is displaying. No one knew whether Dharma knew what he was doing, but they believed in one thing, that running away may not serve any purpose. Better to have a leap of faith with this boy. More so, Boro needed Dharma because he alone knew about those matters, which would help him forge the extremely powerful weaponry.

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## CHAPTER 13

# First Eritrean War – The Web of Politics

Tara started telepathizing, and Dharma received the vision of the first Eritrean attack. Boro, Zoro and Laura were waiting beside them, all drenched in spices and wet with the water of river Junga.

'Sir, I could have travelled to Xor; why did you take the trouble of coming to Ivish.' The I-lord of Zone 13 pleaded. Ralf was standing in the small room, which was made for secret conversations. The sophisticated equipment, too, cannot sneak a peek.

'No, an in-person meeting with you is required. I can't take the risk. I have seen electronic communications are risky. They are caught.' Ralf responded.

I-lord understood why he was summoned to this lonely place on Ivish, and all his gadgets were taken off. He was there devoid of any machinery.

'Tell me, my lord. How can I help?'

'I need one answer. How much are the chances of traceability of the weapons used in the Parinjay attack to you.'

'Chances are there. But I have a defence. I have sold many of them to my sub-vendors. I have many loyalists. One of them can easily put his neck out and take the blame for selling it to a terrorist for better gains.'

'Good. So, we are covered there.'

'Yes, sir.'

'I want to annihilate this terrorist FREE-ME. What kind of sophisticated weaponry is there with him.'

'Sir, as per your instruction, I have given him fine weaponry, best in business, but still, if you want, you can use the Savitra65 ships. He doesn't have them. Their speed is unmatchable and that FREE-ME cannot handle.'

'Ok. I need one help.'

'You order, Sire.'

'Is your Macabre -0 ready?'

I-lord was shocked. There were many space pirates who generally committed loot and then took shelter on those moons and planets where the surveillance was poor. Many were generally given shelter by I-lords under the direct command of Ralf. They act like Ralf's private soldiers in the trade of protection. Macabre-0 were the best in business, and Ralf sometime used them for political killings.

'They will be ready. But they cannot go and kill the FREE-ME terrorist. He is far away. What we know is that FREE-ME was on the planet Parinjay. His entire gang is annihilated, but somehow, he escaped. The chances are high that he might be somewhere in the jungles of Parinjay. Hiding and trying to find some way out of that planet. The best spies and detectives of Nonpareil Soldiery are hunting for him in Parinjay.'

'I know where he is. I want some of your finest to come with me. I have hired the Indpro from Merkels for my visit to Parinjay. I am leaving for Parinjay, and I want your best assassins to come with me as my security guards.'

'Ok, Sir. It shall be arranged.'

The entire populace across various celestial bodies was ready to hear the live address of their Supreme Commander Ralf. Ralf was, for the first time, addressing the Empire from the planet of Parinjay, where such a ghastly attack had recently happened. Various bodies, though, would hear the telecast with different lag, though in some time, it would be received by all.

Many journalists across all planets thronged the auditorium from where Ralf was addressing the Empire. Most journalists were from the City–a cluster of artificially created space cities. The City, in general, was not involved in politics and was mostly concerned with trade, commerce and business. The latest developments at Nadus, the attack on mother planet Xor and Parinjay, had shaken even the capital market of the City. This was a bad omen, and they didn't want this from such a seasoned leader as Ralf. Ralf was voted by City Chiefs because they believed he could maintain stability, but it seems Ralf had failed to meet their expectations.

'The proud Xorians, I am immensely happy to announce that we have destroyed these terrorists' FREE-ME once and for all. The threat of these monsters is over. They have committed a big mistake attacking Xor and Parinjay. We have taken our revenge; we have destroyed the killers of Tnouk.'

Tnouk was the province that was destroyed by FREE-ME terrorists. Almost all million plus IP2+ lives were killed by the ghastly attack.

'My heart goes for Tnoukians who faced the trauma of such a brutal attack unleashed on them as if the spigot of hellfire was uncorked. Although the ordeal can't be undone, to smoothen it as much as possible, I assure you that Tnouk and Parinjay will soon be better than before. For the rebuilding of the country of Tnouk and the planet of Parinjay, immense power is required, and I hereby unveil the gigantic mega-structure which shall completely encompass the sun Acra and provide tremendous energy for the rebuilding of the planet. The megastructure shall be called the Acrian Ring and be ready in a record time of two Mex.' Ralf stopped after a continuous monologue. He wanted the audience to absorb. He was a master orator and knew how to mesmerize the listeners.

'Sir, that is a good step, but what about the cause of devastation. The terrorist FREE-ME has caused a huge loss to the Xorian capital market. The sentiments are so low in the market, and many business houses have lost heavily due to the volatility. What about that? Who shall be blamed for that? Isn't it the failure of the Ralf Administration that it failed to ensure the sentiments of business houses?' One of the bionic journalists from space city Jora, which was part of the constellation–the City, asked.

'Well, the market has always been known for its volatility. There are always some or the other event that shall take place. Markets had a history of always reacting sharply. If you recall the history of when the War of Glory was going on, even big businesses failed because of negative sentiment. Many have written off this interstellar Empire. But we have bounced back so strongly that from that time, we have reached a stage where Xorian Empire's integrity is beyond question.' Ralf was bitter in his response.

'If markets are volatile due to causes beyond the administration, the Ultimate Administrator can be exonerated. In this case, it seemed that the administration itself was helping the terrorists. It is a known fact that Ivish weaponry was used by FREE-ME, and not only lowly weapons but sophisticated warships such as Crusaders were supplied to them.

Even the most dreaded pirates do not have access to such sophisticated weaponry.' A journalist from Hum race, operating from Parinjay, asked. His tentacles were relentlessly moving while he was asking the question. His cinder block legs were trembling, too, due to excitement or fear; it was unknown.

'The Chief Marshal of Nonpareil Soldiery is investigating. Soon the result would be out. Our high-level committee is completely engrossed to find out how a terrorist from Nadus can lay hands to such sophisticated weaponry.' Ralf responded. Though the nervousness in his tone was writ large. He was not at his sarcastic and ridiculing best as he used to be in the past. Maybe he was worried about dirty tricks he had used against his detractors like Shini; he didn't want to taste his own bitter medicine.

Ralf wished that time flew by and his Eritrean mission came out as successful. Once he laid hands on Antium, he would create ships as fast or maybe faster than Indpro, which should divert all attention from these misadventures. Market would jump like crazy on this discovery, people would praise Ralf like a demi-God, and it would put the Xorian Empire on ultra-drive to become a truly strong inter-stellar Empire. Ralf's name would be in the annals of the Xorian history, and his stature would be as big as Floraman Kontana, if not bigger.

Here Ralf was busy handling the journalist from this vast inter-stellar Empire; there, the assassin of Macabre-0 was tracing FREE-ME. Parinjay was an interesting planet. It is covered 4/5th with water and only 1/5th with land. The polar regions were too cold, and thus the habitable area was limited. Parinjay only had three countries, namely Tnouk, Jrise and Noway. All three had a majority of Acrimeans, and the land was fertile. A decent portion of the Empire's food needs was supplied by these three steppes. Tnouk's economy was the most advanced among the three in Parinjay. It used to host the majority of factories for creating food pills and vigour evanescent. The dastardly attack had destroyed everything.

Jrise was farming land, and Noway was known for exotic spices, which helped create certain alternative chewable food. Xorians, at times, chew and eat food so that their teeth and other bodily organs function effectively. Such kind of food was mostly made at Noway.

There were no in-bred, and most of the local species were IP-1. Although Parinjay's exotic and beautiful birds and sea creatures were exported across the Empire and were valued heavily.

'I am now going into the deep sea. Just to test whether there is any pheromone of a Nadusian Mag here.' One of the assassins of Macabre-0 relayed a message to all other teammates who were spread across the planet.

'But how do you know that FREE-ME is a Mag. We have no idea about his race. The only thing we know is he is from Nadus and belongs to Magath. But Magath even has a few Acrimeans too.' Another team member relayed.

'But I can't check for Acrimean pheromones. Parinjay is full of them.'

'That is precisely the point. We cannot use a pheromones detector. We must search for some person who is not from this planet. See, FREE-ME cannot mingle with Parinjay's local population. Because he would get caught. He might be hiding in some jungle or some isolated place.'

'It is very difficult to find out this FREE-ME on such a big planet. We have taken the wrong assignment. More so, this is not even our expertise.' One of the assassins responded dejectedly.

The assassins had been given the task of finding out the FREE-ME terrorist and eliminating him. But the assassins had no idea about how FREE-ME looked or his race. They were just trying to find a needle in a haystack.

One of the assassins went into the deep sea. His job was to scout whether that FREE-ME terrorist was hiding beneath the vast oceans of Parinjay. It was one of the toughest jobs, if not the toughest. Suddenly the assassin felt pain in his arm. It seems the local navy had spotted him, and they were coming after him. The instructions to the assassin were clear. They couldn't get caught by locals. In such a situation, they must end their life. However, instead of ending his life, the assassin started running away. But he was swimming in the deep sea, though swathed in an advanced sea suit; the naval ship was faster than he could manage, and soon one ray hit him, and the assassin lost all consciousness.

'Sir, the President Saddle of Noway would like to have an audience with you.' The humanoid assistance of Ralf telepathized.

'At this hour. Aint the people of Parinjay sleep.' Ralf was shocked. As it was well past midnight and the next day morning, he was supposed to take his shuttle back to Xor. He was in Parinjay only for a short visit. His main purpose was to let the assassin loose who should do their job of killing the terrorist leader FREE-ME, who now was running pillar to post on this planet.

Ralf was engulfed in strange thoughts. This request of his host had disturbed him. FREE-ME needed to be eliminated. If he was arrested alive, it would be a big threat to Ralf. But why did this Noway's President want to meet him? Did he find out about the connection between me and FREE-ME? Ralf was unsure, and his heart was pumping blood at almost double the speed of normal. Parinjay's gravity suddenly became heavier for Ralf. Ralf gestured to bring President Saddle in.

'Sorry, my lord, to disturb you this hour.' Saddle was polite. He was an Acrimean and was almost double the age of Ralf. Saddle was an able administrator and well respected for his hard work and honest administration. The people of Noway were happy with him. He also had, in the past, held the post of Governor of Parinjay, which in the current election, he lost to the President of Tnouk. Saddle belonged to Luminous, the political group which was against Ralf's political group, the Cerebral. But at present, Saddle was there as President of a country of one of the planets within the great Xorian Empire.

'It is okay, President Saddle. I have respect for you. I would not have wasted my time if it had been someone else, but you deserve at least this much.' Ralf responded courteously.

'Thanks, your Lordship. I am extremely honoured. However, what has brought me here is extremely sensitive news, and thus I breached the protocol and met you directly and not coming through the Governor of Parinjay.'

'That is okay. I am not a man who is a stickler to protocol.'

'Sir, today we have caught an assassin, and during interrogation, he revealed he was from the moon Ivish and from that far, he has come as part of your entourage.'

'What non-sense'

'Yes, Sir. But to back up what he was saying, he gave us coordinates of other assassins spread across the planet, Parinjay. We touched base with the local police of Tnouk and Jrise. In a chase out of the three assassins, one got killed, but another one was caught alive. So, we now have two professional assassins who seem to belong to Ivish. Now from Ivish, they cannot come

on any of the transport starships, and the only plausible thing is that they are telling the truth that they were part of your entourage. I just wanted to cross-check with my Supreme Commander before going public.'

'President Saddle, Ivish is just 1.2 Mylight (five light years) away from Parinjay. There is a possibility that some other ways they could land here. Why do you believe it was my entourage they used.' Ralf countered.

'Sire, you yourself answered. The distance is 1.2 Mylight. For even a Stargaze ship, it would take more than two Mex (eight Earth years) to cover this distance. For normal ships, it takes even much more time. They had come in sophisticated Indpro which Merkel's lend at such high price, they couldn't afford.' Saddle responded politely but with a devilish grin.

Ralf was a seasoned politician. He understood the veiled threat in the tone of President Saddle. President Saddle had guessed that to kill FREE-ME, these assassins were brought by the Supreme Commander. But if Supreme Commander wanted to arrest a terrorist or get him killed, why was he using assassins? He could order the extremely skilled Nonpareil Soldiery. They would have arrested the terrorist and tried them as per the process of law. It was clear Supreme Commander wanted FREE-ME to be killed, not tried. Which indicated only one thing, there was some connection between the Supreme Commander and the terrorist.

'Tell me your price.' Ralf conceded.

'You make me Governor of Parinjay.'

'But that is not in my hand. Parinjay follows the election route. Recently the elections happened, and you lost. Now the next election would happen in one Tym's time.'

'I know all that, Ralf' Saddle was now addressing Ralf by his name, which meant he was upset and was not ready to negotiate for anything less. Saddle continued 'The current Governor is from Cerebrals, and you are not only the Supreme Commander but the Chairperson of Cerebral Political Group. You ask the Governor to step down, and this would require an election in the middle. If Cerebrals don't participate, I will win the election easily. To defeat Sonic is not difficult here.'

'Are you out of your mind, Saddle? I cannot just ask a Governor to step down. On what basis. There is no ground. What would I say? This proposal is preposterous.'

'Then tell those assassins to change the target. Instead of FREE-ME, let's target the Governor.'

'No. I can't do that.'

'Ok, Ralf, you have chosen your path. Don't blame me. Tomorrow the world will know that these assassins from Ivish came with the Supreme Commander. I was holding the lid on this, but if I have no interest in the game, why shall I bother.' Saddle turned back and started to leave. His pace was measured as if he knew Ralf would stop him from leaving.

'Ok. Stop. Let's do as you say.' Ralf had no choice. He had to let his own political group's Governor be assassinated, which would result in another election in which Saddle may win.

'Sir, there is shocking news. In just a few Kels (Two Earth days) of your return from Parinjay, the Governor of Parinjay is assassinated. The assassins were also killed by the security team of the Governor.' One of the Administrative Council communicated to Ralf over the communicator, informing the Supreme Commander of the development at Parinjay.

'That is sad news. But ensure our Acrian Ring plan is not hampered. Let the investigation begin as to who the culprits were.'

'Sir, it is also in all over the news that the assassins were macabre-0 of Ivish. Now everyone was wondering how these Ivish residents reached that far. One theory is that they were also part of the FREE-ME group, and this act was done to take revenge for the destruction of FREE-ME.'

'This may be true. Who has floated this theory?'

'Sir, the President Saddle of Noway is advocating this. He is the one who is the eldest statesman there, and with the Governor dead, he is playing the role of a great leader in this time of crisis.'

This Saddle guy was remarkable. He was handling the situation well. Ralf thought.

'Sir,' the administrative council member continued over the device, 'the City chiefs have immediately released a note for scribes all over the Empire, stating assassination of Parinjay's Governor is yet another failure of Ralf's administration.'

'Cut the crap. I am not interested in those capitalists. They have just one God – money; they are spineless creatures. Sometimes I feel why the FREE-ME did not attack these money-minded craps instead of hardworking Parinjays. I am not bothered about those bean counters.'

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## CHAPTER 14

# First Eritrean War – The Reception

'Dharma, are you sure of your decision? You don't understand the consequences.' Boro telepathized as he was distraught with the decision to stay and face the Nonpareil Soldiery.

'Yes, Prof. Boro. Because we have no other option. Your idea of running away may not work. We will get caught.'

'But this is suicide what you are doing. The Nonpareil Soldiery will come any moment now. They will, from their sensors, come to know we are here. They can simply fly and come here in no time. In this country, they can easily find us and either arrest or kill us. Mazolian cannot fight them.' Telepathized Tara in a more sympathetic and appealing tone.

'I understand your concern. But let me put my thought across.' Dharma was talking like a commander dictating the strategy to the team. 'Laura is alive and with us, they know. Therefore, they know that we know that they are coming behind us. If we know this, what should be our usual course of action.'

Dharma paused and glanced at his audience. All four were in deep thought. Dharma continued, 'We would fly away from this planet. Now where we would fly away. Somewhere in space. What should the Nonpareil Soldiery do? They would never come to Mazol but will keep searching for us in the nearby space. Now you have two big black holes. That will also make their task difficult. Because they don't know where we are, they would have to search for us in the vast expanse of this space.'

Boro wanted to counter but decided not to. He felt that there was some sense in what Dharma was saying. Dharma continued,

'Search becoming difficult due to these massive black holes one after the other. So as long as the local spies that they have in Mazol do not tell them that you are here, they would not even think about you being

here. What is a logical step for us to find out about the local spies slowly and carefully and neutralize them? This job, I believe, is cut out for Zoro and Laura. I will tell King Sadhu to also do the needful. They all think I am their God, and they will do this for me. Professor Boro should not get involved.'

All were shocked. It was such a simple solution, but no one could think of it. They all were busy with something else. No doubt that Dharma was special. He could think of something which no one else could. He, indeed, was the son of God. Boro, Laura, Tara and Zoro all became his admirer, and there were many thousands outside their gate who literally thought he was God.

'Dharma, I don't know how you are so clever and witty. I am now convinced that Nokoevid is going to lose the battle.' Boro was ecstatic.

'It is alright, Professor Boro.' Dharma responded shyly. He continued, 'I would request you to send a spaceship in some direction. If possible, towards the black hole. If you have a spare starship. You can send some of the Muksa hardcore prisoners who were given a death sentence for their heinous crime in that starship.'

'I have friends everywhere here. With the help of Laura, I would work on the spies. Will try to eliminate them all. I would also send a spaceship to the black hole. In Satrap, we have the material 'Antium' in abundance. We have created dedicated factories to manufacture Indpro ships.'

'But now you have HTM; why do you use such old technology. When you could travel 7000 C, why bother for 100C.'

'Yes, true. But to manufacture HTM, you need sophisticated machinery. Indpro is old tech. Even a sharp novice in the field could achieve it.'

'Ok. And in the meantime, you have a task at hand.' Dharma telepathized to Tara. 'I shall learn about the first Eritrean war. There is too much to learn. I need to know how Nokoevid came to the picture and how he captured Eritrea.'

Ralf was perturbed. He was anxiously waiting for the time to pass. Things were deteriorating. Parinjay was now recovering in the Governorship of Saddle. But Saddle couldn't be trusted, and now Saddle knew that Ralf was involved in the killing of the previous Governor of Parinjay. This was a dangerous situation. Ivish's involvement was proven with FREE-ME

though somehow the blame was taken by a lowly arm vendor; the public at large was not convinced. This was an open secret that nothing happened at Ivish without the consent of Ralf. Governor Dell of Xor was after him. Ralf had come to know from credible sources that Dell possessed the material to establish that I-Lord thirteen of Ivish supplied the arms to FREE-ME.

Further, Dell was investigating the movement of Savitra65 in unchartered territory. These all were bad omens. Ralf just wanted the Eritrean mission to be successful. That's why he had summoned his trusted war council and going to get the debrief from them.

'The good news is we have reached the edge of Uco Wormhole. We have our AGI humanoid stationed there, who are highly sophisticated and can provide support to the team if required. We have entered the critical phase now. The complex calculation required to traverse the wormhole is cross-checked by our quantum Zitaputer.' General Viz updated all.

'But who is cross-checking the code given by the Mishian.' Juvon enquired.

'We don't have at present the expertise to crosscheck them. Merely to run them, we need such highly sophisticated computers which are eating huge amounts of energy. We could have propelled many Savitra65 in such energy. But the good thing is that our indigenously made auto-suckers can suck the energy from nearby celestial bodies. The asteroid, moons and planets right now are the sources of this energy.'

'General Viz, we are not here to get into such technicalities.' Ralf interrupted in between. 'Tell us the criticality of the mission now.'

'Sorry, my lord. The mission has completed its first phase of reaching the Uco Wormhole. Now our ships under the command of Jason are entering the Wormhole. The humanoid AGI-powered robots will help in ensuring that the code for traversing the wormhole can be executed properly.'

'But whether we have successfully crossed the wormhole and we have reached Eritrea, how will we come to know and when.' Ralf was curious. His time was running out on the political front.

'Sir, the success of the mission will be intimated only when our team captures Eritrea and then mine the 'Antium' and successfully manufacture the Antium starships—our local Indpro and that ship reaches us. The Antium ship will reach us here in roughly two Mex time (Eight Earth

years) because they cannot use the Uco wormhole. We don't have the code to traverse the Uco wormhole from the other side.'

'Hmm. In any case, we have to wait for a time of 2.5 Mex (Ten Earth years) roughly.' Ralf was disheartened that the Eritrean news was coming so late to him.

'Jason! Are you alright? We have just crossed the wormhole and are on our course to Eritrea.' The humanoid robot with sophisticated AGI—named Admirer enquired.

'Ah. Yes, Admirer. But it seems I am alone for so long in this small cubicle, just staring at empty cosmos, and then, while crossing this wormhole, my head starts spinning. I don't know. I can't concentrate on anything.'

'You need to be your fighting best. All four Savitra65 are, and this mission depends upon you.'

'I know, Admirer. But it seems I am not feeling very well. I will rest till we enter the environment of planet Eritrea.'

'Ok. You should rest.'

The Savitra65 were now near the Eritrean atmosphere. They have successfully crossed the Uco wormhole without much damage. Jason, who was constantly alone in a small space of Savitra65 for a period of Tym (One hundred Earth years), was developing some psychological issues. He was the commander of this entire mission, and if his mental health was lost, it would be dire consequences. The crossing of the wormhole also had some impact on him.

However, when Savitra65 crossed the Uco Wormhole, two things happened. First, as per the standard protocol of each proprietary code of Mayo Corporation, the code once used destroyed itself so that it couldn't be reused, and it relayed this message to the nearest data collection and research centre. For Uco wormhole to conduct research on the varied possibility of how to use the Uco wormhole, the Mayo Corporation set up the data centre on a moon near the Wormhole. So once the code was successfully executed, a message reached the moon in around a Mex (four Earth years). From this data centre, a hired Indpro collected the information bulk and shipped it to Shai–headquarters of Mayo Corporation.

The second thing the message not only revealed was that the code was successful but also collected all the conversations that took place in all those star ships which used the code and, in an encrypted form, sent it to the data research centre. Mayo Corporation, thus in the guise of providing the code, used to steal all data of the starships which used its code. This helped them not only understand the cosmic bridge and its consequences on starships but also to pick up important strategic innovations based on the conversation and data analytics conducted by the crew of these ships.

*Planet Eritrea – Country Alpha Heptad (*roughly 480 Earth years before Dharma's entry in Muverse)

'Maharaj, Maharaj!!!' Sapphire was in a petrified state when she entered the diamond-studded room of one of the seven Satraps of Heous who run the most powerful country in Eritrea, Alpha Heptad.

'Sapphire. Why are you disturbing me?' Maharaj was an Angelan watching a fight between an eagle and a vulture while floating in the air. The large dome, which was around 300 feet above the ground, allowed such great vision.

'Can't you see I am exploring nature? See, there is a fight going on between a giant eagle and a vulture? We Angelan love to see these avian creatures do these stupid things. I feel we have evolved from them only.'

Sapphire, who also was an Angelan, commanded her collapsed wing and flew above. She was now near Maharaj. She looked petrified, and Maharaj, within a glance, understood that there was something grave. He stared at the beautiful eyes of Sapphire.

'Maharaj, this is not the time for just merrymaking. The signals from our low-orbit satellite show a huge movement of UFOs in our direction. I told you last time also I can see some alien movement in our space with credibility.' Sapphire blurted out. She was panic-stricken.

'Are you in your senses? We have been sending signals for so long to find out whether there is any other civilization in space, and we have received some kind of message. But if it is so, this is good news.' Maharaj comforted her. He took the small face of Sapphire in her hands. Both were fluttering their wings to stay afloat.

'No, Maharaj. This seems that some alien force is attacking. Because if they were friendly, they would have sent some signals. It seems they are coming at a fierce speed towards us and will reach us in another three days.' Sapphire said with a trembling tone. She was in charge of mission control for alien life. She heads the Agency of Space Control called the Central Space Agency. It had participants from all, i.e. Heous, Acquians, Heretics and Yakuts.

'But how are you so sure they are hostile.'

'I am not sure, Maharaj. But the speed with which they are approaching and deliberately avoiding responding to our radio signals means their intentions are not right. Though nothing can be said with certainty as yet. But we have to be prepared.'

'Ok. Let me reach out to the other Satraps.' Maharaja and Sapphire both landed down. Maharaj walked towards his inner chamber and immediately dialled from his office smart computer to the others, and a quick video conferencing was arranged amongst all the seven Satraps situated in seven different provinces of Heous.

'Maharaj, what you are saying is correct, then we should do something.' Raka, the head of Centauri-land, said. He was a Centaur and didn't understand space technology much. The province Centauri-land was known for ballistic and armament used on land. It has the majority of the population of Centaurs, and most of the Centaurs of Heous stay in this land. In general, Heous did not have had much success in space, except they launched a few satellites and sent some probes here and there.

Heous were, in comparison to Acquian or non-Heous people like Heretics or Yakut, seemed like a superior space-savvy race, but they were a bantam in space technology compared to the mighty Xorian whom they were going to meet soon.

'But the issue is we cannot do much except to keep our military ready. If the aliens are hostile and they touch base on the ground, we should be ready to fight them.' Maharaja said.

'I agree with you. But my suggestion is we take even other groups on board too. We should use our combined military. Like, if the aliens land on the water, our Acquian brethren should teach them a lesson, and if they are on land, we will take care of them.' Jyoti said. She was also an Angelan and was in charge of arms and weaponry for Heous.

'Let me take the King of Heretics, Queen Joba of Yakuts, Param Guru of Acquians and Yogi Raj of Liberals on this conference and discuss with them the next step.' Maharaja said hurriedly.

Soon all were on a video call, and Maharaj briefed them all.

'We should be ready for any hostility. Our nuclear weapon should be made ready which can annihilate the aliens if the need so arises.' Param Guru said.

'Yes, Param Guru. We at Heous will keep it ready. But for water, you must tell the Acquians to be on their toes. Yakuts, Heretics and Liberals don't have any weaponry, but we, the Heous, are committed to protecting them.' Maharaj said.

'Don't worry about the Acquians. They are always ready. They are different from the land trotters.' Param Guru said. He was in a meditating pose in his office, which is a piece of art in the deep sea. Heous always wondered how these Acquians had made such fantastic cities on the ocean bed. The water was still there, but the atmospheric pressure combined with the pressure of the water was huge. Nonetheless, Acquians created structures which were engineering masterpieces, and many Heous citizens spent a bomb to visit such exotic places.

Acquians were like humanoid fish with shimmering golden scales slightly above their beady fisheyes up over their heads and down to their shoulders. Skin colour is a bit greyish as it is constantly under water facing huge atmospheric pressure and given the fact that the gravitational pull was lower and sun rays sparsely reached there. They had special gills to breathe inside water.

Dharma, in his vision, equated them to mermaids and mermen from the fables on Earth. The Acquians evolved a unique feature of late: converting the tail into legs when they had to trot on land. However, on land, the Acquians cannot breathe for long unless artificially supported. In recent times the Acquians had discovered the great usage of sun rays, and they had installed artificial 'repeaters' which then flow the sunlight to them. This usage of sun rays had created new skills in the Acquians, and they developed weapons as destructive as nuclear weapons made by Heous using substances available in the Deep Ocean.

Everybody knew that Acquians were egoistic and warmongers. They themselves had fought many wars. But no one wanted to antagonize them, and not now when there was a risk of alien attack.

'So we all are on the same page.' Maharaja concluded. 'I will ask Jyoti to keep all of us updated on a real-time basis. We will send almost 500 Angelan Heptad soldiers in the air so as to meet the aliens midair in our troposphere. If they are not hostile, they would be greeted, and we shall show our hospitability; otherwise, these soldiers would engage them there to give us time to be ready for the misadventure.'

'But I feel you should also keep the Air Force ready.' Mustafa, who is one of the squadron leaders of the Air Force in Lux Fulgor, a Fleshy-dominated territory, said. It was a known fact that in aerial combats, Fleshy had taken great strides. Even in the Angelan Heptad, the fighter jets were majorly manned by Fleshy pilots. They had mastered the artificial avionics well. Though Angelan can fly naturally and can go to the top of the troposphere, and this had been their edge throughout, now, Fleshy had developed and mastered the art of flying planes. Therefore, Fleshy felt a different pride in bragging about the air force.

'Lux Fulgor contributes minuscule towards the air force. It is the Alpha Heptad's Air Force which is reckoned as a devastating force. In case you have forgotten. We shall be using the Air Force also. Our Alpha Heptad Air Force is on alert, but we would not expose them first.' Maharaj was at his sarcastic best. This was a known fact that Maharaj hated Fleshy. He believed they were a cowardly race. More so, everyone other than Fleshy followed idol worship though they had separate Gods.

Like Acquian follows Ocean God, Angelan the Air God, Centaurs follow their own God, but Fleshy believe in the book. They felt that book was revealed by the almighty, whereas all others felt it was written by ancient Angelan to befool the masses. These religious differences had, at times, led to many clashes, but somehow the Fleshy had survived. They had given a separate province in Heous primarily to follow their tenets. But the constant ridicule by the majority had made Fleshy a secondary citizen.

'But on such a big planet, how will you know where to engage them.' Param Guru enquired more so to end this tension. He had never understood this problem of land-trotters. In the ocean, all follow one God, and all were one race Acquians. Though they had their political difference, which arose from greed, that is simple to understand. Param Guru could never contemplate a situation of managing three different races and two major religions. He was bewildered that land-trotters, despite such differences, had thrived so well.

'Jyoti will keep a real-time track, and the moment they enter our atmosphere, we will know their direction. We will have to keep our forces agile so that they can move at short notice.' Maharaja said.

'Ok. Good. So, there will be an opportunity now to trade even with aliens.' Joba said.

'Hopefully. I believe they are not hostile to us.' Maharaja said.



'What is the communication that is coming from Eritrea?' Jason demanded.

'It is a friendly command. It seems they want to communicate with us. We shall send them friendly gestures.' Admirer was happy that there shall be no bloodshed and it would be a peaceful business deal.

'No, it can be a trap.' Jason was sceptical. 'Don't message them anything. Our strategy should be awe and capture. Before the in-bred understand anything, let's capture them.'

'But don't you think we should give them a chance to show warmth? Maybe they are not hostile. Why shall we begin with hostility? Ultimately, we have to make our base here and establish a factory to make Antium ships.' Admirer persisted with her arguments.

'Ok. Command the naturals to come out of slumber. Assemble them all and the AGIs. They need to be instructed about the mission.'

'Understood. It would be done immediately. We are about to reach Eritrea. Maybe another ½ Mex. I will wake all naturals from their slumber. They need time to acclimatize.' Admirer responded and left the cabin. Jason was staring at the vastness of the space. He wondered whether he still was psychologically fit to lead the mission. The long, long journey had already taken the best out of him. No one planned for this.



'This is the mother lode of Industrium. If I am reading the reports correctly, it means a hundred times more Industrium available in the Merkel realm. We can make Indpros at dirt-cheap rates and make a big cut. This opportunity should not go begging.' Chrome ecstatically said to himself. He was a Melange and the in charge of Mayo Corporation's technical division, which received the consolidated reports from all probes. He couldn't believe his eyes when his AGI assistant brought the report.

This needed to be intimated to the top bosses. He beamed himself to CEO's room immediately.

'Kolark, this needs your immediate attention.' Chrome, without any prior intimation, just landed next to the seat of Kolark, the CEO of Mayo Corporation and one of the most powerful Merkelite. Mayo Corporation was now one of the richest corporations and arguably behind only the Indpro Corp. The profits of Mayo Corporation were meatier than many planetary governments. Kolark was an engineering geek who first successfully coded the complex sequences of traversing the naturally traversable wormholes. This was a breakthrough for which Kolark was respected in the whole of Fran galaxy. Though the Merkels earlier discovered the wormholes and traversed them, with these codes prepared by Kolark, the entire journey was predictable and controllable, unlike Merkel's journey where many times while traversing, one landed up at such place which was unplanned.

Naturally, traversable wormholes could connect point A to many points such as B, C, D etc. If one did not know the art of traversing them, it could lead to reaching a place totally unplanned. Many of Merkel's missions failed due to it. Though many unthought-of discoveries too had taken place due to these unplanned journeys. It was Kolark who ensured that wormholes could be traversed with certainty. This was helpful to Merkels when they had to attack Xor to save the Merkelite and Melange from persecution. Since the time Shai became the base for Merkelites and Melange, Kolark had made his base here. He found this business of selling code to Xor extremely profitable. The Merkelite government did not like Kolark selling his codes to Xor because they felt that this art of traversing the wormhole should not be available to Xorian else they would reverse engineer and discover the secret. However, Kolark was governed by pure profit motives; the Xorian paid him much higher than the Merkels, and second, Kolark was convinced that his codes could not be deciphered that easily.

'Chrome, you should not sneak in like this. I told you a number of times, always inform. The beaming facility is only for emergencies. More so, this is a beta version; we are still working on whether living beings can be successfully beamed. It is very risky.' Kolark was mad that Chrome gate-crashed.

'I am sorry for the sudden appearance, but Kolark, this is very important. Much more important than the new beaming tech we are working on.'

'What has made you so excited?'

'See, we are the monopoly when it comes to traversing wormholes.'

'I know that.'

'But what is the most desired mode of space travel. Is it the wormholes or Indpros?'

'Obviously, Indpro. First up, there are very few naturally traversable Wormholes, and secondly, Wormholes can only take you to certain places, and too many times, it just is a loop, and you are back to where you started. Indpros are the real stuff. It can take you anywhere you want at super-luminal speeds. They don't have the limitations of the wormhole.'

'So if you get a chance to work on manufacturing Indpro, then will you let it go?'

'What nonsense, Chrome? If I get a chance, I will surely manufacture Indpro. But Indpros are not normal starships. They need the material 'Industrium', without which it cannot work. That material is available only on a few asteroids in the Merkel realm, which is far away. More so, all the few asteroids where 'Industrium' is available are the property of Indpro Corporation. In fact, when those asteroids were sold by Merkel's central administration, the importance of 'Industrium' was not known. That's why no one was ready to pay the price sought. Felanie took the bet. She was sure that she might make something with this material. She established Indpro and is now the most powerful and richest Merkelite. The risk she took paid off very well. She paid for the asteroids, selling everything she got. She even suffered separation from her partner. All felt she is stupid in purchasing dead asteroids and paying through her nose. But see today what that decision has made her.'

'I know Kolark, and I know her partner too, who fell in love with her when both were in engineering school. The praises of her beauty and her intellect, everyone has heard in Mayo. You still have not come out from the regret of leaving her. She was the inspiration for you always. Can't you make up with her now?' Chrome, like many other employees of Mayo, knew that Felanie and Kolark, the two most successful innovators, the two brains which were unparalleled; no one could match their intellect, were together, but Felanie's decision to invest in those asteroids made Kolark furious, and they had a bitter fight. Kolark was psychologically so impacted that he left Merkel's realm and came to Shai. But the two pillars of Merkel's domination over the Xorians were because of travelling at super-luminal speed and traversing wormholes, and both were the brainchild of a couple. Chrome, at times, wondered how intellectual the

young one would have been who would have come to the world by fusion of two super-genius Merkelites.

'But I guess you are not here to talk about my failed love life. The past is gone.'

'No, Kolark. You know that whenever we rent our codes for traversing the wormholes to anyone, we keep an encrypted bug which gives us the full details about the success or failure of the journey as well as the conversations going on that starship.'

'Yes. Though this is a violation of privacy guidelines, this is necessary for us to further develop the codes. When we sneak into the communication, we are sure that the codes are working fine. Have you come here to tell me that authorities have decrypted our code? Are we in some kind of trouble?'

'No, Kolark. We have encrypted our systems so well that whenever the journey to the wormhole is completed, the communication comes to us, and the code, as well as the trail thereof, is deleted from the system. No one can either use the code or come to know what has been sent back to us. Because the programming of sending the communication from the wormhole back to us only we can do.'

'Then what is it that has made you so excited.'

'What if I tell you to manufacture Indpros?'

'Again, that stupidity. I told you we can not. Are you suggesting I go and beg Felanie to give me some of the 'Industrium' to make Indpro? And why shall I do that? I may not be as rich as Felanie, but I am smarter than her. I have made code to traverse wormhole which in any day is far more complex than creating the propellers which allow super-luminal speeds.'

'No, Kolark. You are taking me wrong. I have no doubt that you are the most intelligent astrophysicist around. There are very few who can match you.' Chrome telepathized in a comforting tone. He knew that Kolark didn't like to feel that he was not as smart as Felanie. Because Felanie first gave Kolark the option to collaborate. She wanted that both of them should be together in ups and downs. Kolark, at that time, had already successfully made the code for traversing wormholes and was in commercial discussions. He ridiculed Felanie for her idea. He didn't allow her the freedom to even explore. Felanie went alone and felt so bitter about Kolark that she severed all ties with him. Later as fate would have it, Felanie became the most successful entrepreneur. This made many feel that she was smarter between the two. This has always been a sore point for Kolark.

'Then what brought you here in such a hurry.'

'We have discovered a planet Eritrea in C42 Apsis point; a planet with a mother lode of Industrium.'

'What!!' Kolark was super excited. 'What is the coordinate of the planet?'

'C9'9:42.15 – 'C9 bar 9 on forty-two dot fifteen.' Responded Chrome.

'Show me the report.'

Kolark could not believe what he was seeing. The discussion and analysis, which took place in Savtira65 starship where the technical staff was travelling to Eritrea, suggested that there was a huge amount of 'Industrium.' The planet hosted an intelligent life capable of showing some resistance.

'Do you think we shall involve the Shai government?' enquired Chrome.

'No. If we involve them, they will come to know about this huge stock, and then they will not give us any credit. Who knows, they will punish us for snooping in. We have to be careful.' Kolark was clear in his mind. He needed to get this entire stockpile for himself. Mayo Corporation must beat the Indpro Corp. Felanie shall regret it. She should know that Kolark was the better of the two.

'But, we cannot fight the Nonpareil Soldiery of Xorian. They are far more powerful than us.' Chrome was sceptical. 'I have gone through the details thoroughly. The two Savitra65 star ships have almost 200 highly equipped Nonpareil Soldiers, and the other two Savitra65 have technicians for producing the Indpros. The locals of planet Eritrea are IP-2, but they don't have the capability to even stand a day the brutal attack by Xorian. Their best bet is to use nuclear bombs, but then it can be dodged by the Nonpareil Soldiery because, in an Eritrean environment, they can fly at an average speed of 10,000 umh. Thus I don't think there is any chance of the locals. At that speed, they start lodging the attack of gamma rays and solar radiation blasts; it would be too hot for the locals to handle.'

'I know all that, Chrome. What if we contact the Macabre? The renowned space pirates. If we pay them enough, they will be ready to work for us. We need to defeat just these two Savitra65.'

'But Kolark, Macabre are good for sudden loot, not to take the Nonpareil Soldier head on.' Chrome believed that this idea was not worthy of even trying. No one can match the strength, agility and combat skills of Nonpareil Soldiers.

'We will give them one Indpro, so they can be faster than the Savitra65. They have to help the locals in the fight. This can be managed.' Kolark responded.

'Do we have any Indpro?' Chrome was surprised.

'I have hired an Indpro, Embracer 1 from the Indpro Corporation, to visit Parinjay. I wanted to sell our beaming technique to the corporates working on the Acrian Ring. Our beaming technique works well for shorter distances to transport non-living stuff.'

'If we use that Indpro, Felanie will come to know.' Chrome was highly sceptical of the idea.

'No. It will be as if the Macabre have committed a loot and kidnapped me during my journey to Parinjay. They would demand a ransom, and Mayo Corporation will pay them this ransom for my safety. This way, our accounts will also have justification to pay money to them. The Indpro will be used by them.' Kolark telepathized with a grin.

'But you won't be on Embracer 1. Who knows if the Indpro Corp also secretly sends data to Felanie, you would be tried for serious crimes, like fuzzing accounts, abetting pirates etc.' Chrome was playing a true devil's advocate, bringing out all the scenarios that may go wrong.

'Who says I won't be there. I am going to Eritrea. I will command everything from Embracer 1.' Kolark telepathized with a glint in his eyes.

'All on guard. We are entering the Eritrean solar system. Eritrea is merely a hundred Lukum (hundred million km) away.' Admirer telepathized to all on the four Savitra65 starships.

'Bonita and Delice shall halt at 100 Lukum.' Commanded Jason. Bonita and Delice were those Savitra65 ships which were carrying the technical team. Jason continued. 'Destiny and Devrez shall continue to march.' Destiny and Devrez were the two Savitra65 ships carrying the Nonpareil Soldiery.

'First AGIs 101 division will disembark and try to capture the planet. They will then be followed by the naturals of twelve divisions, followed by the AGIs of 103 divisions and lastly, the naturals of eleven divisions. Two Naturals and two AGIs shall remain back, securing the four ships. I shall be going in with naturals of twelve divisions. Copy that.' Telepathized Jason to all the soldiers.

'Copied,' Responded all the soldiers.

'Naturals of twelve divisions shall immediately spread across the planet in a group of two. They shall first try to analyze the position and

accordingly intimate us all. I shall be there with them to command. Once we assess the situation and command, then only 103 divisions shall disembark. Copy that.'

'Copied.' All responded in unison.

Jason cut the connection with this message.

'Jason, do you want to respond to the radio message from the planet Eritrea. Shall I send a response? If you want, I can go as an emissary and report back to you; then, you can plan the attack.' Admirer was waiting for Jason's final command.

'Ok. Once we are a Lukum to Eritrea, we shall send a radio response to them. Then we can send you with a few soldiers. Ask them to be a territory in direct Xorian control. They will learn from our great civilization a lot. Our price is merely the material 'Antium' for which they have no use.' Jason responded.

Soon they reached one Lukum (one million KM Earth standard) from Eritrea. As decided, Admirer in an armoured suit severed from the Savitra65 in a smaller shuttle which would cover this journey in around ten Ahoms (twenty Earth hours).

'We have received the signals from aliens.' Jyoti was excited and nervous at the same time.

'Good. Can you decipher their language?' Maharaja enquired.

'It seems they are a much intelligent specie. They have responded to our signals at the same frequency which we have sent. It suggests that they want a friendly relationship.'

'But suppose they turn up here on our planet, how will we interact with them.'

'I have no idea, but we have kept our books ready. If they are a highly sophisticated race, they may have computers to quickly scan and understand the language of natives.'

'Ok. Jyoti. Inform all and be ready to greet them. You shall be there along with other Angelan. Send the radio signal back so that the aliens know that they must land on Heous's capital.'

Soon thereafter, Admirer's shuttle entered the Eritrean atmosphere. She had received the radio and was following the trail. Once she descended nearer the planet, she could see the beautiful Angelan contingent flying

and waiting to greet her. This was a new view for Admirer. So many people were flying up and in their four hands lots of flowers and such other pleasant looking things. Soon Admirer put her shuttle on auto mode and ejected herself. She, in her armoured suit, flew and reached one of the Angelan, who was the leader of all.

'Welcome, alien.' Jyoti said.

'Thanks for the warm welcome.' Admirer telepathized, and Jyoti felt as if someone just spoke in her mind in her language. 'We can speak through mental waves. Don't worry, you will get used to it. You simply think, and I will understand your thoughts.'

'Wow, that's wonderful. We were wondering how we would communicate with the aliens. But this is easy. Come, I will take you to Maharaj, head of Alpha Heptad, one of our seven Satraps.'

Maharaj welcomed Admirer, who looked like a human of the Earth, though, in fact, she was a highly sophisticated droid with AGI of such a high level that she was capable of even understanding the undercurrent that was going on in any situation. Admirer was one of the best pieces of engineering excellence, and she had served the Xorian causes in many space explorations. She was the perfect emissary to be sent on such missions. The Angelan and others of Eritrea thought aliens were like Admirer. They could not guess that Admirer was not a natural being but a robot. They brought food and drinks for Admirer, but she politely refused. Eritreans thought that she suspected that they would poison her.

'Thanks a lot for your friendly gestures. I reciprocate the feelings. I am touched by the beautiful welcome of the beautiful people of this planet. We call this planet Eritrea in our Xorian records. First up, I would like to know what you call it.'

'Thanks for accepting our hospitality. There are four primary intelligent races, and all have different names for this planet. The Angelan calls it 'Mother', Acquian calls it 'magical sphere,' Fleshy calls it 'Land of Light', and the Centaurs call it 'Life-giver'. Commonly we call it 'Nar'. But Eritrea is an interesting name that aliens have given us. It suits us, it seems.'

'In the Xorian philosophy, Eritrea means the planet full of potential.'

'That may be correct. Ours is a planet with lots of potential. We are still taking baby steps in space exploration, and our max reach was to our moon. Do you have any specific name for our moon too?'

'I am afraid not. It wasn't our focal point.'

'Ok. All four races refer to the moon also differently. But the common name is Tia.'

'That's interesting.'

Soon Maharaja made Admirer meet all the other Satraps, and Admirer also visited various places on the planet, including the underwater Acquians. Admirer had left a good impression of alien or Xorian life on the Eritreans.

Admirer went back to her shuttle to give the report to Jason and to ensure that they all could have a friendly discussion. Admirer understood that Acquian, Angelan and Centaurs worship different Gods, but the idol was made up of one material, 'Antium'.

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## CHAPTER 15

# First Eritrean War – The Battle Begins

'Do you think we will reach in time?' Kolark nervously enquired from the Captain of the Indpro shuttle. He did not want to waste any time. He wished that some magic had happened and he was in Eritrea. He couldn't lose the lifetime opportunity.

The captain did not respond. Captain was not happy to have twenty unknown and unverified people on the board. But Kolark said that these twenty people were the technical experts who should be fixing the beamers on Parinjay. Given the urgency, Kolark said he did not do the verification. The captain was Merkelite, but his assistant was a Hum[8] named Ola, whose tentacles have strong olfactory senses, including sensing danger. Ola was sceptical that this twenty on-boarder did not bode well, but Captain had no choice. They were hired for the journey till Parinjay and Kolark had paid the Indpro Corporation the charges for this sudden change in plan and inviting twenty extras. All these twenty extras belonged to different races, but all looked ominous.

Nonetheless, Captain ordered all to place them safely at their allotted seats. Everyone was asked to hook himself with automatic safety straps. All were safely placed along with Kolark, who had a personal security guard with a laser blaster. Kolark was seated in a comfortable seat which could be converted into a bed, unlike the others who were only given a seat. Distance to Parinjay was around five light years from Shai. This distance would be covered in around ten Kel's time (Twenty Earth days around), and for these many days, the on-boarders would have to just sit on a small

[8] Hum race is aboriginal of planet John. See Various Races Annexure.

seat. Though they were allowed to pace up and down once the starship was outside the heliosphere of the Xorian stellar system.

The starship lifted on solid fuels, and it was in cosmic space shortly, and then the warping moment started with a thud. The ship was now on super-luminal speed. The coordinates were set, and the journey towards Parinjay would now be on auto-mode.

Captain declared that people could now come out of their safety belts and feel free to roam around the little space in the circular cabin, which had artificial gravity to ensure that the on boarders did not feel physical discomfort. The environment was full of different types of gases, and different food and tablets were available to give comfort to the passengers.

Ola was though very perturbed. His olfactory tentacles had become hard, and it was an indication of serious trouble. The captain, too, sensed some danger, though he was clueless about what to do. The ship was on the cruise to Parinjay, and he had to now go by the flow.

Ola stared at one of twenty ominous looking macabre; he was Nadriman Namuh by race. He was around five feet five inches tall, with a well-toned body. His white complexion radiated as he was draped in a completely black dress. He got up from his seat and approached Kolark. Ola could not believe that one of these technicians wanted to meet Kolark in the middle of the flight.

Though meeting Kolark was not easy, his security guard, who was a golden-coloured Melange, stood up and took out his laser blaster. He indicated from his laser blaster to the Nadriman to go back. But the Nadriman seemed like a trained fighter, and to Ola's utter surprise, he jumped and gave a fierce kick on the neck of the guard, and the guard immediately fell to the ground. The Nadriman gave another chop on the hand of the guard and snatched the laser blaster. He shot at the security guard, who was lying on the floor. It was a killing in cold blood of an innocent being who was not resisting.

Ola's tentacles had become extremely hard. The captain was shocked to see a brutal killing in front of him. He should not have allowed this sinister Kolark to get these unverified people on the board. Soon other macabre too came into action. The Nadriman macabre, in no time, shot at the androids who were there for the safety of the passengers. In no time, all the droids, robots, AGI-based guards, everything were silenced.

Nadriman Macabre announced that this was a hijack and that the captain had to follow the orders.

'I refuse to follow orders. Mind you, without my assistant and me, you cannot operate this machine, you dumb brutes.' The captain was furious. But to his utter surprise, the Macabre did not flinch and trained the laser blast at the captain.

'What? Are you out of your mind? You will be finished. Embracer 1 will become your graveyard.' Captain understood that the macabre was going to kill him. But how did this brute have the confidence that someone other than the captain and his assistant could command this complex shuttle? Before the captain could ponder more, he was silenced by a shot of a laser beam killing him immediately.

'So what are your thoughts?' Nadriman Macabre addressed the little assistant.

'I am in. I shall help you.' Ola responded. The eyestalks couldn't stop blinking, an indication of his nervousness.

'You are ready to help, but I don't need any help. I don't kill the lowly Hums. You are forgiven. As long as you don't create trouble, you have the right to live. Listen, all the Embracer 1 is in my control, and you all shall do as I say.' Macabre leader addressed all others who boarded the Embracer 1. The others were none but only the macabre now. It was a ploy to showcase that a few macabre had sneaked in as the technicians and had kidnapped this starship.

'What do you want?' Kolark asked courageously.

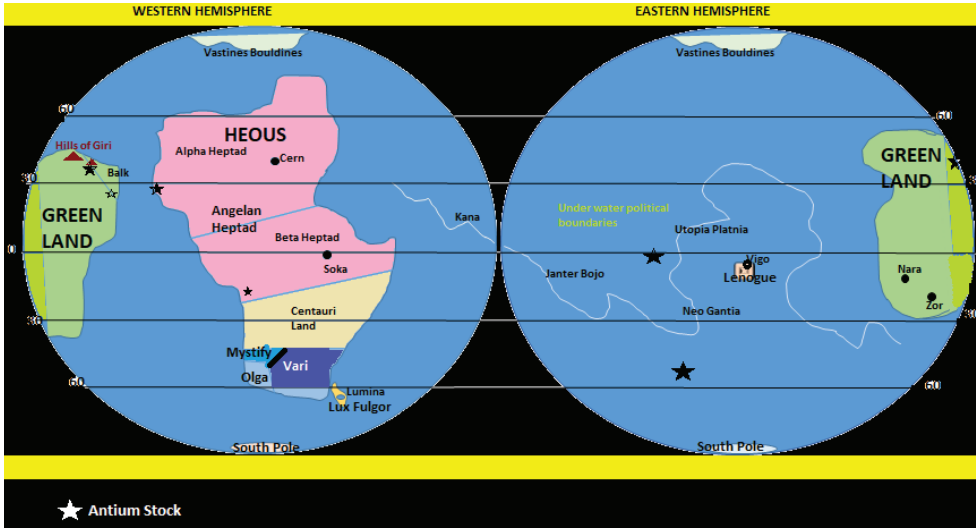
'Nothing much. I just want you to ask your people to give us money.' Macabre responded.

The Savitra65 starships now had reached just the edge of the Eritrean planet. Admirer was in the small makeshift cabin with Jason explaining to him what she found out in her rendezvous with the in-bred.

'Jason, I have got the majority of the information about the planet Eritrea. If you permit, let me update you in detail. This planet indeed has a good stock of Antium, and it is scattered all across the planet.' Admirer telepathized to a seemingly anxious Jason.

'Good. Update me in brief and quick.' Jason was in a hurried mood.

'Sure, Jason. See, this is the planet of Eritrea.' Admirer telecasted a vision before Jason.




'Good at $30^0$ latitudes, I can see huge stock of Antium. Also, some in the deep ocean.' Jason was quick to react.

'Yes, Jason. The planet of Eritrea is divided into two major divisions, the sea dwellers and land trotters.'

'Sea Dwellers?'

'Yes, Jason. They have an intelligent race which primarily dwells in deep ocean beds. They are also advanced technologically.'

'This is interesting, really, very interesting. Advance fishes.'

'The land trotters are mainly divided into Heous region and Green Land or Non-Heous region. In the Heous region, as you can see, the political division is primarily under seven provinces the Alpha Heptad, Beta Heptad, Centauri Land, Vari, Mysitfy, Olga and Lux Fulgor. These seven provinces elect their own leaders, and collectively, these satraps then make decisions for the entire Heous land mass.'

'Interesting. Very similar to us. The provinces or satraps are individually governed.' Jason was showing some interest in the polity of Eritrea.

'The Green Land or non-Heous region is not politically divided into sub-parts. Here there is no political boundary as such. Here primarily the tribes of Heretics—ancient settlers, Yakuts, the businessmen who don't want to pay taxes, and Liberals, the ascetics who concentrate on spirituality. They are the ones who generally reside here.'

'Good Admirer. What types of races are there?'

'I am coming to that. The sea dwellers are called Acquian. Though they all dwell inside the sea and have almost one hundred different political divisions, the most powerful among them is the country of Lenogue. These sea dwellers all listen to their spiritual leader Param Guru, who generally resides in Vigo, the capital city of Lenogue.'

'Interesting. But do these land trotters and sea dwellers fight amongst each other?'

'No, Jason. Not of late. Here the interesting part is though all sea dwellers are Acquians and belong to the same genetic race, the land trotters consist of three different intelligent races. The Angelan, who look similar to Acrimean Namuh but have wings and fly. Also, they have an exoskeleton which allows them to host four hands. They are the highest number of land trotters and mostly reside in the territory of Alpha and Beta Heptad. Thus, it is called Angelan Heptad.'

'Ok. So, this is the primary race in land trotters. The flying Angels.'

'Angelan Jason.'

'You concentrate on your briefing, Admirer.' Jason didn't like correcting his mistakes.

'Next is Centaurs. They are like half horse, half Namuh. They reside in Centauri land.'

'Good, we have many fantastic IP-2 life here.'

'Yes, Jason. Last is Fleshy. They are genetically and in appearance similar to Acrimean Namuh. But here, they are treated as second-grade citizens. Many of them are shoved to the deep south of Heous area in the country of Lux Fulgor.'

'That is interesting. These can be the ones who can help us in our fight. They can be the traitor type.'

'Maybe. Earlier in the clash of civilizations, Acquian never fought with land trotters in any major battle because the sphere of influence was different; one was in the deep sea who couldn't survive long on land, and the others were those who could not go in deep sea without artificial support. However, on land, it was a different story. Angelan can fly and thus always had added advantage in any war. Centaurs can run fast. So, these two have inherent advantages over Fleshy; thus, Fleshy were behind the race. But once the modernization happened, Fleshy got the chance to prove their mettle, and in avionics, they have done great. All the commercial planes and fighter jets are mostly run by Fleshy.'

'Ok. Why are you stressing so much on these lowly Fleshy?'

'Because rest all belief in idol worship. Whether Angelan, Centaur or Acquian. But Fleshy, as a race, believe in a book called Bof. They don't believe in any idol.'

'So how does it make a difference?'

'Angelan, Acquian or Centaur may have hosted me well, but if I tell them I want the material with which they prepare their idols, I doubt whether they will be as friendly. We can use Fleshy as a tool.' Admirer put across her point, and she thought that she had articulated it well.

'What you are saying is that the Eritreans are friendly people, but they will not part with 'Antium'.' Jason was unnecessarily getting piqued. It may be because he had travelled such a long journey and that too in non-slumber mode. It was having a deep effect on his psyche.

'Kind of Jason. But you need to befriend them, and we need to find a solution to get the Antium. We shall not be hostile to them unnecessarily.' Admirer was cool in her response.

'No. I cannot wait. I shall be going with you along with Natural's Division 12. The AGIs 101 shall also disperse across the planet Eritrea and wait for my command.'

'But Jason, if you would make the AGI 101 division spread across the local Eritrean may get alarmed unnecessarily.'

'I don't care. If our talks fail, I don't want to waste any time. I want the attack to begin immediately.'

'But Jason, you are rushing into things. We can use Fleshy as our tool.'

'Don't teach me my job, Admirer. You are here to obey commands. Do as I say. We are going to march to the Heous' most important city Cern in one Ahom (two Earth hours).' Jason commanded.

'Welcome, Xorian King' Maharaj welcomed Jason. The twelve most powerful people on the planet, along with other dignitaries, were present to receive the alien commander. Soon they all took Jason and Admirer to the palatial room.

'Thanks,' Jason telepathized coldly. He was in no mood for any reconciliation. His job was cut out: the Antium should be captured and a factory to be established to make Antium-propelled starships and go back to Xor and declare the mission as successful.

They all had seated at their respective seats. The servers were serving the delicacies. Jason, though was in no mood to receive such hospitality. The media, too, was present. The screening of the alien commander was live across the planet. The people wondered if Jason was looking similar to a Fleshy. This was a cause of jealousy amongst many as Fleshy, in general, was not respected.

'We, the seven Satraps of Heous, the Param Guru who commands all Acquians, the King Heera of Heretics, Queen Joba of Yakuts and Yogi Raj of Liberals, represent the entire planet, and we all are here to welcome our new friends.' Maharaj was ecstatic in introducing all the important people of the planet to Jason.

'See, I am not here to waste my time. I have a simple deal. I want the material with which you make your God's idols. I need all of it. In return, you can ask whatever you want; if it is reasonable, we shall show mercy and grant you that.' Jason's tone was demeaning, and his presence was such that he was dictating his terms to all these top representatives of the planet of Eritrea. It seemed from their style of Jason that he was prepared for the war. Jason was armed in an armoured suit, and a few armoured guards of his Nonpareil Soldiery were guarding him. Division 12 of Nonpareil Soldiery, which had fifty naturals, mostly Acrimean Namuh and a few Ausulvanian Namuh, were hovering above the meeting room and could wreak havoc at a gesture of Jason. Their appearance and demeanour were causing fear and anxiety among the Eritreans.

'This is not possible. We can offer you anything else. We would like to have a friendly trade with you.' said the Param Guru. Everyone present in the meeting was watching the aliens. It was a big meeting room, and the proceeding was telecasted live across the planet. Param Guru, and the other seven Satraps of Heous, Queen Joba and King Heera, were cognizant of the public sentiment.

'We are not requesting. We are demanding. Either you abide or get destroyed.' Jason was furious.

The telepathic message was received by the people who were present. The media scribes translated it and subtitled it in the live telecast. The public at large was getting extremely uncomfortable with the behaviour of the alien. The interest that Admirer developed, the warmth that she showed, was now missing suddenly. It seemed that a hostile alien race wanted to conquer their planet and want to take away the material by which their God's idol was created.

The alien, who looked like Fleshy, were against their Gods. It seemed like a Fleshy conspiracy to the people at large, and soon massive riot started at places where Fleshy were getting targeted.

The good impression that Admirer had on the Eritrean populace as well as the leaders of Eritrea, all got lost by the manner Jason behaved. He had come across as a dictator who wanted to destroy the idols of Eritrean Gods and take the matter away. Had he asked politely may, be the Eritreans would have found a way, but the fiat which Jason shoved upon them, was not gracious. It hit the pride of Eritreans.

'Then we are afraid alien; you cannot have any trade. We give you time to leave, else you will be responsible for the consequences.' Param Guru of Acquian gave the ultimatum. The Acquians otherwise also were hot-tempered.

'You lowly in-bred, I am not here to abide by your ultimatum. You will soon see the destruction writ large. I can kill you all here. But you have invited me to a negotiation meeting, and we don't do bloodshed in such meetings. I am leaving, but soon you will repent.' Jason shouted and left the room with Admirer and his Nonpareil Soldiers.

'AGI Division 101, you have the first job. Show the in-bred our power. Identify where the maximum population of IP-2 life is and destroy them.' Jason was in his chamber at Savitra65 Destiny and in a furious mood. Soon the AGI division 101 started blasting the cities of Heous as well as other populations on the land.

'Jason, our soldiers have done a fantastic job. In no time, they have caused so much destruction that the major cities of the most important country Alpha Heptad of Heous, appear like a desert. It is fire and destruction everywhere.' Admirer reported. Though she was against this bloodshed, now the water has crossed the mark. She was well-trained to take these things in stride. She was the second in command, and soon her role was to ensure that the planet was captured completely.

'Good Admirer. I don't want any mercy on these in-bred. I want the Nonpareil Soldiers to also attack the ocean deep. I want to teach that fish a lesson.'

'But Jason, do you think we should attack the ocean deep right now. Our focus is not to take personal revenge but to capture Antium and

manufacture the ship. Supreme Commander Ralf is eagerly waiting for us.' Admirer, as always, was much more focused. At times Jason wondered how a robot could be so thoughtful and correct. Admirer had become a friend to Jason, and at times Jason simply forgot that she was an artificially created robot and not a natural person.

'Ok, Admirer, I take your point. Let's focus on our job.'

The AGI division 103 was flying at high speed and shooting laser blasts and gamma radiation blasts. Their first target was a city named Balk, far away from the capital of Heous-Cern, where the meeting between Jason and the in-bred had taken place. This place, Balk, was hilly and had huge mines of 'Antium'. This was chosen because Heous' army would find it tough to reach there; however, for the flying soldiers of Nonpareil Soldiery, it would not be a tough task to create its base. The cities and towns were brutally attacked, and in no time, they were brutally destroyed. The Nonpareil Soldiery made their base immediately and surrounded an area of almost 200 $Um^2$ (Equivalent to 200 square kilometres). The local Angelan and Centaurs who were shooting bullets and canons at the Nonpareil Soldiery were no match. They could not penetrate the armour of the Nonpareil Soldiery. However, the Xorian laser blasts and gamma rays were causing huge damage to them. In almost no time, Nonpareil soldiery had fortified a large area, and they were protecting it from all directions. Soon the Fleshy in Jet planes started bombing the area captured by Xorian soldiers, but the planes were no match to the speed of Nonpareil Soldiery, and soon the Jets were silenced. Given the area was hilly and Nonpareil soldiers were almost immortal and impenetrable, the Heous soldiers had given up the fight.

'The news is not good. The entire city of Balk is destroyed with almost 10,000+ death. They have captured the hills of Giri from where we get the black stone for our idols. The entire area is in their control now.' Jyoti reported to all the seven Satraps, Param Guru and various leaders and military generals of Acquian countries.

'We cannot help you much here. The hills are not near the sea, and we cannot survive that long on land. I am afraid the Acquians are not of much help.' Param Guru responded.

'That alien has made his mind clear. He wanted the material with which we make our idols. That's why he has captured the mines, which have a huge stockpile of black stone. If we don't react, I guess they will just make their base in Balk and the nearby area. We should not attack unless we figure out a potent strategy.' Maharaja said.

'It is true that the alien interests lie in Balk as it has the black stone. But it seems they are also attacking Cern and another part of Alpha Heptad. Just to cause maximum loss of life and property.' Jyoti continued.

'These attacks will not stop. They will keep on attacking all of us. Right now, Alpha Heptad of Heous is facing the wrath, but we don't know soon they can come after everyone.' Raka said.

'We shall immediately contact Admirer and surrender. We shall give whatever they want. Otherwise, they will simply destroy us all. We can live with the fact that the aliens have a factory at Balk. It doesn't hurt us much.' The Chief of Aerial Battle gave his views. He was a Fleshy. Though Fleshy, in general, were not respected in Eritrea. They were treated as second fiddle. But of late, Fleshy has shown tremendous progress in the field of science and technology. Most of the jet fighters and pilots of the civilian aeroplanes were Fleshy.

'No. They are asking to part with our Gods. We cannot do that. This is the question of our prestige and our pride.' Maharaj responded.

'But our Bof says that idol worship is the biggest crime. Maybe you are suffering because of that. These aliens are sent by the supreme real God, and that's why they demanded your idols. Believe me, you all should accept the true faith, give your idols to these aliens and save the Land of Light.'

'What nonsense are you talking about? You are a fraidy race. Instead of fighting the bloody aliens who are destroying our 'mother,' the very planet which gave us life, you are teaching me to give up arms and take their shelter. You get lost from here; otherwise, I will kill you first.' Maharaj was highly ferocious.

He couldn't believe that Fleshy, at this point, brought up religious differences. Angelan believed that they had tolerated the Fleshy for so long. Fleshy were weak and were of no use. Still, the Fleshy race was allowed to flourish because Angelan and Centaurs were large-hearted people. Fleshy believed in Bof, and they were allowed to practice their faith. But now, at this time of crisis, when the entire planet was raided by an alien race, they were advising us to become the slave of the aliens. These Fleshy should have been eliminated long back.

The chief of aerial warfare stepped away with his shoulders down. He had achieved a lot in life but yet suffered these humiliations.

'Coming back to our discussion. This meeting is called to understand our next steps. The aliens will not stop. They would target our cities.

They have already made their base at Balk.' Jyoti continued as if nothing had happened.

'We need to find out how to penetrate their armours. We have lost 10,000 lives, but not a single loss has occurred on the other side.' Param Guru said.

'Only option left is nukes. We have stockpiles of nuclear bombs. These can be used.' King Heera of the Heretics suggested. He was Angelan by race. The nuclear bomb was a sensitive topic. Only Heous had the capability of using the nuclear bomb. It was alleged that Angelan Heptad had almost one hundred nuclear warheads collectively. Acquians did not have any nuclear weapons, though they had a different weapon called an 'Annihilator.' Heretics, Liberals, Yakuts and the Acquian nation-state had always opposed these deadly weapons and even staged protests to destroy nuclear weapons.

'Look who is talking. People who opposed the nukes throughout are today advocating its use.' Maharaj was at his sarcastic best. He cannot miss the opportunity of showing down these rebels who always had voiced to destroy nukes and even had protested in large numbers when Heous was developing this technology. These nukes were the major reasons why the war with the Acquians was averted, and now these nukes will help them ward off this evil alien attack.

'This is not the time to scratch the past wounds. We need to focus. I commit all the weaponry and resources at our command. I will issue the fiat to all Acquian states. We need to have one general whose command we all obey for better utilization of resources. I am ready to lead the battle, and I am also ready to be led.' Param Guru comforted the land trotters, and he didn't want the inner fight of land trotters to damage the chances of winning the war against the alien.

'I agree. I feel the best war tactician is Jyoti. She is in charge of our weaponry and one of the sharpest minds for warfare tactics. She is a calm, collected person, and if you all permit, I want to declare her the General for this war and we all shall commit ours all at her disposal.' Maharaja proposed. Jyoti was someone who was always respected for her tactical thoughts. She had managed the weaponry of Heous well, and at the time of the standoff between Heous and Acquians, Jyoti had played a key role.

'I am okay'. King Heera was the first to accept Jyoti as a General in command of this war against the alien.

'I, too, commit my resources under the able leadership of General Jyoti.' Param Guru responded.

Soon the Nonpareil Soldiery cleared a vast structure around the area under their control. The hills containing huge piles of 'Antium' were at the centre. A boundary wall was created, which demarcated the area. Jason and Admirer also landed in the area now under the control of Nonpareil Soldiery.

'We need to now consolidate. There is a huge stock of Antium here. Ensure we have around 10Um$^2$ area (Equivalent to ten Square KM Earth standard) completely clean for us. Fortify it fully. Then we shall order Delice and Bonita to land here and start manufacturing.' Jason commanded his soldiers.

'Copied.' Responded the soldiers.

'I want 11 and 12 division to be here and AGI 103 and AGI 101 to continue to singe this planet. We need to find out the stockpiles of Antium and slowly establish our manufacturing units there too.' Jason commanded.

'We shall soon report to you about the Antium locations.' Admirer responded.

'Good. Soon I want to send our Antium propeller ships back to Xor. This would be a watershed event in the history of the Xorian Empire.' Jason was highly excited.

'There seems to be some problem with Destiny and Devrez. They have not responded to our signals.' Admirer was sceptical.

'What can happen to them? They are far away from here. I don't think the in-bred have the capability of reaching there and destroying them. More so, we have kept a Nonpareil Soldier each in the two starships.' Jason commanded.

'I know. I will check and will report soon. I have one more doubt. As per my study, the most dangerous weapon that the in-bred have that can cause us some damage is nuclear weapons. My estimation suggests they have the fission bombs with capabilities of around 1.5 to 2 Vish.'

'Just 1.5 to 2 Vish. This is child's play for us, Admirer. Our Mayhem blasters, at max capacity, can release 150 to 200 Vish energy and that too with high precision. We need not bother. Just fortify our facility better and

fence it with our ground radars and projectile defence. It would be enough defence to such little boys.'

'But Jason, don't you think we will give them a target to attack if we establish a factory now? The war is in process.' Admirer was sceptical of Jason's plans.

'No Admirer. We need to capture areas with huge 'Antium' stocks and start establishing our facilities. Because we cannot wait for the war to be over. It would take a huge amount of time before we can win this war. It is important that we have a few Antium propellers ready to be shipped to X141. Because then only our replenishment will come.'

'Ok. Agreed. But then we must really fortify well. We will be sitting ducks for the nuke attack.' Admirer suggested.

'Yes. To alleviate your fear of nukes, command the soldiers to find out the nuclear installation sites and destroy them. Hopefully, soon they will get destroyed.'

Soon the Nonpareil Soldiery created two fortifications in different areas of Heous, one was the Balk city and nearby hilly area, and the other was almost 1000 um (1000 KM Earth standard) away, and this area fell outside the political territory of Heous and in the area where few of the Liberals mostly meditate. This was a volcanic region and generally had no vegetation. The caldera formed due to large volcanic explosions in the past was of much interest to Xorian; near that region, they found lots of Antium. The Savitra65 starships Bonita and Delice landed. The facility to manufacture the Antium propelled starship started. The layout design team had already started working on the shipbuilding engineering. Soon the civil engineering team was involved in the building construction. The technical team was full of AGI droids and other robots that worked incessantly. As the Eritrean day was long, they had full exposure to sunlight and thus were charged fully. It seems that in no time, the facility for manufacturing the Antium starship should be ready.



'They are establishing some kind of facility.' Jyoti remarked.

'Our next step should be to attack these facilities. We can nuke these facilities.' Raka shouted. He was a Centaur and known for being a hot-headed person.

'But nuking our own land would have consequences.' Maharaja said.

'We have no other option. This is a desperate time and calls for desperate measures.' Queen Joba said.

'Ok. Let me ask the expert.' Maharaja said and connected the in-charge of nukes, Prof. Deba. 'Professor Deba. We need your help. How is the preparation? Can we nuke these aliens?'

'Yes, Maharaj. We can now easily target them. Earlier, these soldiers were flying across our planets and were difficult to target. But now it seems they have established some kind of facility to manufacture something. Many are concentrated in two pockets, one is near the Balk city in the Greenland continent, but it is politically an affiliate of Alpha Heptad of Heous, and the other is in non-political territorial land in Greenland, which is mostly a deserted area except a few Liberal monks. We can easily target and kill the alien. The downside is that we will have to suffer the impact of radiation in the coming years. Balk is a green region.' Prof. Deba was an expert in nuclear science and was well respected by all. He was an Angelan. His assistant, though, was a Fleshy.

'Ok. Then let's put this to vote as to how many of us want to nuke these aliens.' Maharaja said.

'But killing our own people and such devastation.' Yogi Raj was sceptical. He had spoken for the first time.

'Do you have a better idea? The aliens are going to kill us, nonetheless. If we can destroy the majority of them because now, they have congregated in two areas, let's not miss this opportunity.' Raka, one of the seven Satraps, retorted.

'I not only support this idea, but I am ready to take one step further. We can launch an attack from the ocean bed too. With this dual attack, we would ensure that the majority of these aliens are annihilated. Rest our soldiers can go and kill them.' Param Guru said in a very serious tone.

'Good. So, our strategy is clear. We are going to bomb them from land as well as from water. Hopefully, the majority of them will die. Rest we will fight with whatever ability we have. If we constantly target them. Hopefully, their armour will give in, and we can destroy them.' Jyoti said.

'The Acquians are ready; we can now destroy them.' Param Guru responded over the video conferencing facility.

'But Param Guru, the facility established, is in the middle of a land mass. The ocean is far.' Maharaja was not sure how Acquians could attack the alien facility.

'We have readied our most powerful weapon. The Annihilator. It will be launched from the deepest ocean. This weapon would destroy the area completely where the aliens have established their facility.'

'Why we didn't use the nukes before, I fail to understand.' King Heera was furious.

'Because it was difficult to target these flying machines whose speed is much faster than any of our missiles. However, now we have fixed targets.' Maharaj explained.

Here the Eritreans were getting ready to nuke the facility; meanwhile, another alien ship Embracer-1 was near the Eritrean space.

'Macabre, we need to destroy these Savitra65 ships.' Kolark was clear that before landing on Eritrea, the two Savitra65 ships Destiny and Devrez, needed to be destroyed. These ships were stationed outside the Eritrea low orbit area waiting for the next command. There was only one soldier each in the two starships.

'But Embracer-1 is not armed with any weaponry.' The Macabre responded.

'I was not talking about Embracer-1. I was wondering if you, Macabre, can go inside the Savitra65 ship and capture it.' Kolark explained himself.

'But if there are Nonpareil Soldiers in the starships, we cannot match them. They have superior armour and modern blasters. They will overpower us in no time.' Macabre knew about the strength of Nonpareil Soldiery.

'I know that. But there is one weapon which I especially got here for this occasion.' Kolark was cryptic. 'You are twenty strong soldiers. I will beam you directly in the Savitra65. I just need one of you to simply put this transponder inside the Savitra65 ship.' Kolark grinned.

One of the Macabre took a smaller spaceship and, from Embracer-1, started a journey towards Destiny. Another Macabre was approaching Devrez. Once they were near their respective target ships, they received a signal.

'Stop!!! Identify yourself.' The message from the guard of the Destiny. The Nonpareil Soldier was ready for any eventuality.

'I am from the Eritrean planet. I must deliver this transponder which needs to be kept inside the ship. I am here to deliver this to you. Please

put this gadget in the control room. This is Jason's order.' the Macabre responded.

'But how do I know that Lord Jason has sent you.' The soldier was suspicious.

'Then you have all the right to message anyone and confirm. But mind you, they are in the middle of a war. The fierce fight is going on. Even the two Savitra65 ships were on the ground with all material to make the Antium-propelled ships. Still, at such time you want to get into such bureaucratic protocols, then I leave this up to you.' Macabre responded with full cunningness.

The soldiers knew temperament of Jason. Jason, of late, had become moody. The natural Nonpareil soldier guarding Destiny accepted the transponder as he had no way to confirm the veracity of the statement. The signal to ground zero was already disturbed and lost.

The soldier of Devrez was an AGI robot, and instead of accepting the transponder, sent a signal to Admirer; as per the protocol, all messages to Jason had to route through Admirer. Till he awaited the response from Admirer, he kept the macabre and delivery inside the Devrez custody area. The messenger was asked to wait till the signals with Admirer were connected and a response received.

But both soldiers were unaware that these transponders were powerful beaming machines, and in no time in the Savitra65, Mcabre were inside. They stole the spare armoured suit, and soon thereafter, the two Nonpareil soldiers bit the dust. Savitra65 ships—Devrez and Destiny—were now in Kolark's control. With Embracer-1, Devrez and Destiny, Kolark entered the atmosphere of Eritrea and sent the radio signals to the in-bred.

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## CHAPTER 16

# First Eritrean War – Another Alien Interference

'We have received another signal from aliens. This seems to be a trap.' Sapphire was frantic on the call to Maharaj.

'But Sapphire, who is this another alien. What it wants from us.' Maharaj was confused.

'I don't know. But if we can meet them, maybe we will understand.' Sapphire concluded.

'Ok. Send a message back and see whether you can set up a meeting. But ensure this time we meet them in Deep Ocean in the city of Vigo and the capital of country Lenogue, which is one of the most powerful Acquian countries.' Maharaja clearly had a plan.

'Any specific reason to meet them underground.' Sapphire wants to know what is going on in the mind of Maharaja.

'Yes. If this is some kind of trick, I am sure these armoured monsters can be tackled in Deep Oceans. They might not have fought in the Deep Ocean, but our Acquian brethren are experts in that kind of fight. Hopefully, they may resist better than us.'

Sapphire sent the message back to Kolark, and soon Kolark and two macabre in fully armoured suits, which gave them the look of members of Nonpareil Soldiery, were at a conference room ten um (Ten kilometres Earth standard) deep inside the water.

'I am different from the Xorian. I am Merkelite. Though given my armour which is of Nonpareil Soldiery, you may be confused.' Kolark telepathized to all present. However, it still seemed that none present there could understand what he wanted to say at first.

'But then, if you are different, why have you come in the armour of those aliens with whom we are at war.' Param Guru enquired.

'Let me explain to you all.'

Everyone was attentive, and Kolark started to telepathise to all present. One of them was speaking up about what was received as a mental message for the audience on the other side of the video conferencing facility.

'I am from Merkel, which is a different inter-stellar civilization. The people who attacked you are Xorian. Xorian are evil, and they want to steal from your planet. You cannot match them, and that's why I have come to safeguard you. Without my support, you cannot withstand them. You can see my soldiers are equally capable of withstanding them. So, if you help me, we both can destroy the Xorian.' Kolark continued.

'But why have you come all the way to help us. What is in it for you?' Param Guru enquired.

'I also want the same thing as the Xorian. We call the material 'Industrium'. But you give me only if you want. I will help you against the Xorian onslaught, and in return, you allow me the mining right of black stone.' Kolark responded.

'To save us from the alien, you just need mining rights for black stone. Are you sure it is this much?' Maharaj was not sure. He was sensing some hidden agenda.

'Yes. That's it. Because your black stone is used for making idols of God for you, but for us, it can be used to make fuel for our star ships. Maybe if our business relationship improves, I can also help you with that technology.' Kolark was opening up.

'What do you want from us in exchange, other than the mining rights?' Maharaja, who was connected through video conferencing, asked.

'Nothing. I am here to help, not to trade. Once things normalize, we will see how best we can help each other. Merkels are not like Xorian. Now if you all agree, let's plan the attack.' Kolark was sure that his plan had worked. The destruction caused by Nonpareil Soldiery had dented the confidence of the in-bred, and they were happy to take whatever support came. Further, now Kolark also had twenty Macabre with the armoured suit of Nonpareil Soldiery. Thus, he had a good chance of killing all the Xorian and taking the in-bred in confidence. With this, there shall be a huge supply of 'Industrium', and he would be the richest person in the Fran galaxy.

The full team was sitting in a deep bunker conference room in Cern–Alpha Heptad's capital. Kolark was invited too. Param Guru was physically present, and a special water cabin was made for his comfort. He was inside the transparent water cabin, wearing a helmet so that he could listen and converse with the outside land-trotters.

'Captain Josh, you fly over and drop a nuke from the air to the centre of the facility near Balk City.' Jyoti commanded.

'But I told you that we have ignited the Annihilator. You don't have to use these toys.' Param Guru could not fathom what this Jyoti was up to. Everyone praised her wisdom and tactical acumen, but Param Guru was convinced she couldn't withstand the Acquian efficiency.

'I know Param Guru, your team has initiated the Annihilator, and maybe it is more potent than all our nukes. But before using our most lethal weapon, it is advised to see what the enemy is up to. Captain Josh is one of our best jet fighter pilots, and he can manoeuvre his aerial machine beast like no other. Let his first try to nuke the facility. If he succeeds, we will not use Annihilator now; if he fails, we will come to know about the strength of the enemy. We have already seen their soldiers have impenetrable armour and can fly at ultra-fast speed. They have wreaked havoc with extraordinary blasts which destroyed anything they touched. We need to be fully sure about their capabilities before we use our trump card.'

'Smart move.' Param Guru got a taste of Jyoti's capabilities and why she was respected a lot. She was a beautiful-looking Angelan, but more than her beauty, her wit and tactical acumen had got her laurels.

'I shall fly and try to penetrate the armoured soldiers. My jet could cross the troposphere, and the soldiers would follow me there. The moment they are just behind me, I will dive down as if I am hit. My free fall will give them an illusion that this threat is gone, and maybe they will get a bit relaxed. When I would reach a certain distance, I would drop the nuke and try to leave Balk City. The nuke will burst just above the facility in the air and cause huge destruction.' Captain Josh explained his tactic.

'Ok. I shall send thirty more jet fighters; soon, they all will create a similar illusion of free fall. Hopefully, we can destroy them.' Jyoti said.

'This may not work.' Kolark telepathized.

'Why, what is wrong with this plan?' Jyoti did not like the way Kolark was butting in. She was the commander-in-chief. This golden-skinned man draped in armour donned by their enemies could not be trusted.

'Because, if I am not mistaken, the Xorian would have already actuated the air-borne buckler defence. You can say it is a shield floating in the air, and whenever any missile or aeroplane not registered with it is near its vicinity, it triggers an attack of high-precision destructor rays and destroys it immediately. Even if you drop a nuke, it would be blasted into the air, and the energy shall be sucked by the buckler. The capacity of the buckler is almost ten Vish which is equivalent to five times the firepower of your bombs.'

'Then what is your suggestion?' Param Guru also was concerned. Though he believed that his Annihilator would not get affected by the airborne buckler defence of the Xorians.

'I can help you here. In fact, I am the only one who can help you.' Kolark was cunning in his tone.

'We know that alien. We already have a deal. You take our God's material and protect us.' Param Guru said sceptically.

Captain Josh, who was a Fleshy, was frustrated with this idea. The Xorian commander was asking the same thing. He was asking to get the black stone, and he would not have caused this destruction. Now they were trading black stone to an alien to get rid of another alien. Bof was correct that these idolators should be destroyed. But he could not have said such things. He was a small fry.

'I agree with your thoughts. Don't worry; I will support you soon too.' Kolark's voice can be heard by Captain Josh and only him. He understood that Kolark had read his thoughts.

'I know Param Guru. But I am not doing this for our deal. That can be a gift from one friend to another if you consider me your friend. I am doing this because it is my duty.' Kolark telepathized.

'What is the plan?' Jyoti was getting a bit impatient.

'Plan is simple. I will send one of my soldiers who are in the armoured suit of Nonpareil Soldiery. I will hack into the system of airborne bucklers and ensure that my soldier is registered. Then this soldier will get entry, and he will be in without detection. Slowly this soldier will destroy the defence system. Given that it was a long journey, and they had to carry a lot of material, they only had one defence system. More so, they never expected that in-bred could ever destroy their defence. They don't have any other defence system left. But they have Mayhem, a very deadly weapon, and we cannot let them use it. Therefore, the moment the Xorian defence is rendered useless, Param Guru uses the Annihilator

and destroys the Xorian factory. With that, the Mayhem will also be rendered useless.'

'But if Mayhem is blasted, it would cause harm to our planet.' Jyoti couldn't understand what Kolark was inferring.

'No, Jyoti. Mayhem is like your nuclear fission bomb. If you have the pieces separately and they are destroyed, it will cause some radiation but not the destruction the bomb will cause. Likewise, if Mayhem is destroyed without being trained or assembled to fire, it will get destroyed. There shall be some similar impact like radiation, but then your Annihilator, in any case, is going to destroy that piece of land.' Kolark explained.

'Brilliant alien. We are indebted for your help.' Param Guru, for the first time, spoke with respect to Kolark.

'But I still need Captain Josh.' Kolark announced.

'I am all at your service. But how can I help.' Josh was confused.

'Josh, I understand that you are a brilliant Jet fighter pilot. I need help that you fly near the base. The defence system will get activated. The radar of Xorian defence will identify you and send a signal to the airborne buckler defence, and then that defence will check whether you are covered in the list or not. You would not be covered; thus, the buckler will shoot a missile at you and try to destroy you. Also, it would open up its suckers so as to suck up any energy that may generate out of the collision.' Kolark continued.

'Ok, sir. I would go there. I ain't afraid even if the missiles shoot me.' Josh responded.

'No, Josh. I won't let anything happen to you. I just want the defence to trigger because then only I can hack the signals. My armoured soldier would be near you, and it would shoot the laser blast at the missile. Before the Xorian defence would understand that you are not a normal target and trigger a much higher precision blast, you would run away and have a deep dive into the ocean water. There the Acquians will save you.' Kolark concluded.

'Ok, Sir. I understood.' Josh said.

Suddenly Josh again heard Kolark's voice in his head. It was another private message.

'You need to find out about this Annihilator of the Acquians. Once this war is over, the Acquian would be our biggest enemies. We need to neutralize them, and for that, their weapon must be neutralized.' Kolark had already made his plan for the future. He was a cunning businessman

who planned four steps ahead. He was known for his strategic acumen in the whole Xorian Empire.

'Understood, sir. Would do that.' Josh simply thought, and he knew that Kolark would read his mind.

'There seems to be some fighter jet approaching us. Do you want our soldiers to engage and destroy?' Admirer asked Jason.

'No Admirer. Let our soldiers protect the facility, and we need to get the building construction done quickly. Antium ship's manufacture is our topmost priority. Our defence shield will take care of the fighter jets.' Jason responded.

'Ok, Jason.'

Soon the fighter jet was near the radar's range, and radar activated the defence shield, which shot a laser beam towards the jet driven by Josh. However, before the laser ray could touch Jet, it was neutralized by another shot by the Macabre armoured in the Nonpareil Soldiery suit. Before the defence shield could shoot another high-precision ray, Josh, with full throttle, took his jet away and had a deep dive into the ocean. The precision ray followed Josh into the ocean, but Josh ejected himself and was immediately led by the Acquians to some distance of safety. The ray hit his jet, and it was destroyed. Josh was hit with the outer effect of the blasts, but it was not severe.

'Jason, the jet was destroyed. But it seems its pilot ejected in the ocean and survived.' Admirer reported.

'It is okay. Please don't bother me with such innocuous details.' Jason was not interested in small flies buzzing near his armoured fortress. He wanted to see the Antium ship ready and send the first ship to X141 and then to Xor. He wanted to see the pleasure on his face of Ralf. For this mission, Ralf had given his everything.

'The building construction is ready, and maybe in another ten Ahoms (Twenty Earth hours), the outer structure of the ship would be ready. Soon we would have the first Antium Ship.' Admirer reported to Jason.

'What is the maximum time we can expect before I can see the ship?' Jason demanded.

'As per our estimation, in fifteen Kels (Thirty Earth days), we would be ready with the trial of the first Antium ship.' Admirer reported.

'Ok. fifteen Kels equals how much to the local time.' Jason inquired.

'It is around five days here in Eritrea.' Admirer responded.

'We need to be careful for these five days. Ensure that the destruction throughout is increased. I want the in-bred to get busy and away from our two facilities.' Jason declared.

However, before Jason and Admirer could understand anything, there was a huge blast in the facility established at the volcanic region.

'What is this flash? Admirer, give me a full update.' Jason directed Admirer.

Soon Admirer returned with the full update.

'Someone has attacked our facility and destroyed the defence shield. The intruder is countered and captured. Our investigation reveals it is a Macabre from Ivish.'

'What? This means that someone has come to know about the Eritrean escapade.' Jason was shocked.

'Yes. And this intruder was in our armoured suit. Which means that Destiny and Devrez are captured by them. That's why the signals to them were not returned.'

'This means some other outsider is here too who is helping the in-bred. That's why they can so easily destroy our defence shield.'

'Yes, Jason. I have checked our systems were hacked. I have undone all that, but the defence shield is destroyed.'

'I guess this supporter of the in-bred doesn't know we have Mayhem, and we can destroy this entire planet. Though I cannot do that because it frustrates the purpose. We cannot let the supply of black stone go in tatters. But if we don't win, we will ensure no one else gets a hand in this immense supply.' Jason had a fire in his eyes. He cannot let this mission fail. Something was telling him that it was the Merkels who had reached here and helped the in-bred. He was ruing the fact that he got fewer soldiers. He should have got fifteen Savitra65, as was the initial plan. He could have fought any army then. But he couldn't cry over the spilt milk.

'Admirer, we need to ensure that our guards are vigilant. What is the status of nuke of in-bred?'

'Our soldiers have identified all the locations, and in no time, they all shall be neutralized.'

'Good. Ask our soldiers to rain death all over this planet. We should teach them a lesson. Division 11 shall protect the Bonita facility, and

Division 12 shall safeguard the Delice facility. Division 101 and 103 of the AGI soldiers shall be directed to rain hell.'

'Copied Jason.'

'And try to find out about the hacker.'

'I am already on it, Jason. Soon I will find out all the details. We shall not let this supporter of in-bred go scot-free.'



'The defence is done and dusted. Now is the time for the Annihilator.' Kolark was ecstatic.

'Yes. I am going to order the Annihilator for destroying the facility.' Param Guru was excited too.

'What about Josh? Where is he?' Kolark enquired.

'He is safe. We are sending him back to land.' Param Guru didn't understand why Kolark was so interested in a Fleshy.

'No. Involve him in your core team, which is deployed for Annihilator.' Directed Kolark.

'But he doesn't understand a thing about Annihilator. This is a weapon developed by the Acquian country Lenogue. This was specially made in order to create a deterrence against Heous. If the land trotter decides to attack the deep ocean with their nukes, we would be protected by the great oceans, but our counter-attack by Annihilator will destroy a big chunk of Heous, and they would not be in a position to come out of it. This weaponry is different and based on the material available at the ocean bed. No land-trotter can understand the engineering behind it. What is the use of a Fleshy there?' Param Guru countered. He didn't want any outsider to know about this technology. Because this gives them a defence against all land-trotters. God forbids the aliens to capture the land, and the Acquians were safeguarded as long as they were in the Deep Ocean and had annihilators. Because even the mighty alien would find it difficult to attack the Acquians, spread across the ocean bed of the planet, but the Acquians could attack them through Annihilator.

'Don't doubt my intention, Param Guru.' Kolark telepathized in a comforting tone, and this time only to Param Guru. 'See, you are correct that Acquians are very powerful, but you don't know how powerful the aliens are. If the Annihilator fails and the mission just falls flat on its face, who will face the wrath? It would be you. You are the one leading

from the Acquian side. Don't you need an excuse? But if you let a Fleshy, who is generally hated and who was even ready to give the black stone to Xorian out of utter cowardice, lead this mission, you have a backup. I will defeat these aliens either now or in some time. See, I have destroyed their airborne buckler; if I have not done that, your annihilator would also be of no use. Trust me, I can defeat them. It is a matter of time. But I don't want you to be exposed. That's why I am letting this Fleshy as a defence for you.'

Param guru was confused. He didn't know what to do? On the one hand, Kolark seemed to be a cunning guy, but on the other hand, what he said made sense. The Acquians had blind trust in him, but what if the Annihilator failed. What if the mighty Xorian still had a trick up their sleeves? Param Guru would lose the trust. Annihilator was a sensitive weapon. It cost a bomb to develop, and they only possessed one Annihilator; developing others might take a lot of time, effort and money. This was made to deter Heous. He couldn't use the Annihilator without a plan. If this Fleshy runs the show, it would be easy to put the blame on him. This alien Kolark was right.

'Ok, you guide. I am ready to do as you say.' Param Guru thought as he was sure Kolark would read his mind.

'In my opinion, let's have Captain Josh deal with this mission. He has done a fantastic job putting his life at risk, and had he not done that, I would not have breached the system, and my soldier would not have destroyed the airborne buckler.' Kolark telepathized to all.

Jyoti was also happy that one of her commanders was getting the lead in an Acquian mission. This had never happened in the past. Acquians were taking the help of land trotters was itself a miracle.

'But Jyoti, are you sure we should trust this alien.' Maharaj was sceptical, and he texted Jyoti over their communication. Maharaj was trying hard not to think on those lines as Kolark could read his thoughts.

'I agree, but we have no option. And right now, it is good that our person is in the Acquian command. An annihilator is a secret weapon, and no one knows about it. It is really good that one of our commanders comes to know about it.' Jyoti texted back.

'But a Fleshy' Maharaj didn't like Fleshy. He considered them a traitor race.

'He is one of my commanders. He oversees our Air Force. I trust him fully.' Jyoti spoke as a true commander-in-chief.

'Ok.' Maharaj had to concede. He had no option but to let things unfold as they were.

Soon Josh found himself inside a chamber which was an engineering masterpiece created on the ocean bed. Josh was covered in a suit given to the oceanaut to help him survive. He was surrounded by many Acquians who were working there. He could see a huge machine in the middle of the ground in front of them on the ocean bed, like a rocket base on land. It was clearly visible that a huge rocket with many sub-rockets would be propelled from underwater, and it should be destroying the target. But ultimately, it had to go up in the air, and then it would work similarly to the missiles they had in Heous.

'I don't understand much, but if you have to propel this big a rocket first beyond the ocean and then in the air and it attacks the installation, it would be a huge wastage of your fuel.' Josh spoke through the comm device inside his suit. It was deemed an unnecessary communication by the in-charge Acquian.

'You Fleshy, you are not supposed to talk. You are here because Param Guru has ordered. I know you can fly those small machines well, but this technology is beyond your understanding.' The in-charge Acquian was visibly unhappy to have a land-trotter that, too, a lowly Fleshy with them.

'Try me. I am a fast learner.'

'I don't have time to waste on you. But since you are here, let me tell you that our technology is far superior. You at Heous might have a hundred or so nukes, but you cannot touch the ocean bed with precision. But we can hit the core of your facilities at will. But even to understand the basics of that, you need to be a master of bathymetric calculations.'

'I know a little.' Josh was insistent. He wanted to learn how this weapon worked.

'Well, this is a secret.' The in-charge said. Then he thought, why not boast a bit. Otherwise, also these Fleshy would not understand a thing.

He continued. 'Since you are part of our core team, let me tell you the basics.'

'Thanks. I am all ears.' Josh responded.

In a tone of superiority, the Aquian said, 'So understand this we are at the ocean bed, and the land trotters are at the top. But they are all on the land, and tectonic plates are deep at sea. We have precision calculations whereby we have not only mapped our ocean bed, but we have mapped the land also. We know the actual points where we hit so that the tectonic

plates will move and destroy each other. The only problem is that our fuel is highly limited, and this kind of precision movement of tectonic plates to cause harm to a particular part requires a huge amount of fuel. The materials that we get at ocean beds are not found on land. This material is far more lethal than the radioactive materials you have on land. You use them to fire nuclear bombs, and we use them to hit on specific points for moving the land mass from beneath. It is like an acupuncture technique where we hit the right points with such ferocity to cause huge damage on land.' The in-charge responded.

'You can destroy the facility established by the aliens from underneath. You don't require to trot on land or air.'

'Yes, Fleshy.'

'Then why Param Guru did not disclose this to the alien. Why the defence shield was required to be destroyed.'

'Because Fleshy, our fuel is extremely limited. Despite the full attack of Annihilator, there is a possibility that the alien facility is not destroyed completely. If they survived and shifted to some other place and established a base there. Then we would need to attack them in the traditional way through land or air, and that is the time when the defence shield would not allow us to penetrate.'

'So what, you can destroy that part of land too with Annihilator; we never would have been required to use the infantry or air force.' Captain Josh was inquisitive. The Acquian engineer may be an engineering mastermind but was extremely poor in street smartness. He was divulging classified information without inhibition.

'No, Fleshy. The material required to fuel Annihilator cannot be developed in a lab. After millions of years, due to the atmospheric pressure, the substance is developed, which is mined from the lithosphere. The quantity is precious little. Therefore, the Annihilator was never used before and was only used as a deterrence. We can only use Annihilator once, and that too we have to choose whether we want to destroy specific portions of land like in the instant case where the aliens have made base or the whole land mass.'

'What? You have the capability of destroying the whole land mass.'

'Yes, this Annihilator can then focus on hitting those specific precision points which would create such a movement of tectonic plates that it would be irreversible, and the plates would collide with each other to destroy the civilization above.'

Fleshy was surprised about the capabilities of Acquian. He now knew the basic details about the weaponry of Acquians.

'We have received a message from Param Guru.' One assistant hurriedly swam inside the secret cabin. He was talking to the Acquian-in-charge in the local language of the Acquian. Josh did not understand what was going on. Though the comm panel of his helmet received the voice, the language was incomprehensible to him. Acquian could speak in their language beneath the ocean without the help of any artificial support. However, land-trotters required special helmets and comm-panel to even receive the sound.

'What is the message?' The in-charge demanded. He spoke in the language which even land-trotters could understand. It was a cue that the assistant who just entered could speak in a language which even the land-trotter could understand.

'The aliens have identified the location of nukes. They had started targeting them specifically. Maharaj and Jyoti have requested Param Guru to initiate Annihilator. Param Guru has sent a message to destroy the Greenland area of Balk and its surrounding to hundred square kilometres.' The assistant conveyed the message.

Josh was extremely happy. He received the message this time that the language was the common language spoken by land-trotters and Acquians both.

'This means it is time to use the Annihilator.' Josh asked in inquisitiveness.

Josh could easily see a cunning grin on the face of the in-charge Acquian. His tail was wagging strangely as if it was secretly gesturing to someone. Josh did not know exactly, but it seemed that the Acquians would not support the land trotters. He had to somehow neutralize this weapon. Josh, did not believe the alien completely, but he had no option. If he did not go with the alien, the unbelievers or in-bred, as the alien says, would never allow Fleshy to grow.

*Despite Fleshy as a race doing so well in all walks of life, they treat us as a second fiddle. Bof said it clearly that the unbelievers should be made to believe in the tenets of Bof else it was better to lead a separate life with them.* Josh thought. In Josh's interpretation, destroying them all was the right interpretation of a 'separate life.'

'Jason, the traitor, has been found. It seems an Indpro has come near Eritrean environment, and few Merkelites are here to support the in-bred.' Admirer explained to Jason, who was planning his next move, and the whole map of Eritrea was before his virtual screen.

'I should have guessed it.'

'But now we have things under control. We have trained Mayhem at locations other than where we have a huge stockpile of Antium. The good thing is that the material 'Antium', which the in-bred calls black stone, is available in volcanic areas or the deep ocean bed. The city and civilization which developed here in Eritrea are at a distant place.' Admirer telepathized to Jason.

'Wonderful Admirer. Now we will show them what the fury of hell is. Ensure that Mayhem and our soldiers destroy each part of the citizenry. As you said, first attack and finish the Alpha Heptad, the most advanced nation in this world.'

'Done, Jason. Otherwise, also we have identified all the nuke locations and almost destroyed them. We are sending soldiers to the Deep Ocean to ensure that the oceanic civilization, unique to this planet, is also taken care of. We will show them we can fight a better battle underwater than them.'

'But why do we need to attack in Deep Oceans. You yourself stopped me, Admirer when I mooted the idea.' Jason was confused.

'Because this is not for personal revenge. We have found the material 'Antium' is of two types here. One is available in the volcanic region, which we call 'Antium–ava', and another is in the Deep Ocean, which is 'Antium–i'. As yet, our engineers are wondering which of the two Antium would be better suited for the propeller. But nonetheless, in any case, we need both the Antium types. There is a huge stock of 'Antium–i' in Deep Oceans.'

'Ok. We will not leave any Antium here. We need all of it. If need be, ask AGI 101 division to attack the Deep Ocean and capture the area with the highest stock of 'Antium – i'. Jason growled.

'What about those Merkelites?' Jason was extra furious when he mentioned Merkelite.

'I have found everything about it. The soldier we captured did a thorough screening and interrogation. They are macabre soldiers working for Kolark from the Mayo Corporation.'

'Kolark. Mayo Corporation. We have used their technology to traverse the Uco wormhole.'

'That's true, Jason. It seems they have snooped in our system, and they have come to know that we are here on planet Eritrea which has 'Antium' or 'Industrium' as they call it. Therefore, Kolark came here without telling the Merkelite Administration.'

'How do you know Kolark has not informed the Merkelite Administration.' Jason couldn't understand the puzzle.

'Otherwise, he would have come here with Merkelite forces. They are equal, if not better, than our Nonpareil Soldiers. But he brought lowly macabre. Why? Because he could only buy these mercenaries for this mission. The macabre knew they could not match our soldiers, so they got the opportunity when they saw that our Savitra65 Destiny and Devrez were without much protection. They somehow neutralized our soldiers there and stole our armoured suits. Kolark is a technological geek, and he hacked into our systems, and his soldier destroyed our defence shield. Kolark is helping the in-bred. And his motive is clear. He wants to get this mother lode of 'Antium,' and if he helps the in-bred in defeating their enemy, then he will easily keep this huge stock for himself. He will start manufacturing Indpro, and you cannot imagine the profit he would make out of it.'

'Oh, this capitalist. We are working for the pride of our Empire, and this bloody Kolark only has his personal interest paramount.' Jason had a huge contempt for Mayo Corporation, like Ralf.

'Do you know where Kolark is?' Jason further asked.

'Yes, Jason. Kolark has committed a mistake in hacking us. He hacked us with his personal device. Maybe he did not bring any other device. This personal device is embedded in his person. We have the coordinate for the device; we have the coordinate for Kolark. We need to act fast. Kolark must be arrested, and I have sent five of my best soldiers to the coordinates.'

'You are the best, Admirer. Connect to your soldiers. I want to see the demise of this Kolark.'

'Sure, Jason.' Admirer immediately gave a mental command to connect to the soldiers.

'Hello, Admirer. We have reached our destination. The signals are coming from the capital city of Lux Fulgor province. We could easily reach the building where Kolark is. It seems the Fleshy, as the in-bred call them, are showing no resistance.'

'I know soldier X341. The Fleshy is believed to be a coward race. Though, in fact, they are not. They are cautious but not cowardly. It seems

they don't want to support this alien. Thus, you are finding no resistance.' Admirer responded.

'But Kolark's presence in the capital city of Lux Fulgor itself means that Fleshy were supporting him.' Jason added.

'Shall we destroy the building.' Asked the AGI humanoid droid X341.

'No. Go inside and try to capture Kolark alive.' Admirer commanded.

'Ok. Copied.'

The visuals were kept on; thus, even Admirer and Jason could see the scene from ground zero. The soldiers were going inside the building, and the signals were getting stronger. It suggested only one thing Kolark's device was inside. This was an embedded device in Kolark's person. It meant Kolark, too, was inside. X341 was easily moving inside the building. The building seemed like some kind of office for a chief or head of state. It was a palatial building. But surprisingly, it was bereft. How could this be possible? Was Kolark alone?

'Admirer, this is surprising. No one is there in the building. Ask our other soldiers to move away. Send only X341 alone inside.' Jason could easily sense a trap.

'Ok.' Admirer immediately signalled all to go away at a huge distance and directed X341 to get alone near the device.

Soon thereafter, X341 entered the room from where the signal was coming. It was a grand meeting room but totally empty. X341 reached the place where the signals were strongest. The visuals were telecasted to Jason and Admirer on an artificial screen created by Admirer's eyes. X341 reached the device, and he could see the device. Kolark was not there. But before X341 could understand anything, there was a huge nuke blast. X341 was destroyed completely. This was the first casualty of the Nonpareil Soldiery and the second loss of Jason after the destruction of the defence shield. The other Nonpareil Soldiers were asked to be at a distant place, but the blast was so powerful that it engulfed them in no time. All the five Nonpareil Soldiers were gone. The visual last shown to Jason was of a severed hand, and then it was all destruction.

'Severed hand of Kolark.' Jason furiously exclaimed.

'Yes, Jason. Kolark has severed his hand. Kept it in the capital city of Fleshy. The inbred hate Fleshy. Our soldiers followed the trail, and they set up a nuclear attack destroying the city and our soldiers. Five of our soldiers have perished.' Admirer telepathized in a sad tone. She was

flabbergasted by this mistake. It was stupid to commit so many natural soldiers to this chase.

The meeting auditorium in Cern, the most happening city of Angelan Heptad, was now used to witness the leaders of land-trotters, Param Guru and the golden-skinned alien Kolark, meeting, plotting and planning the next steps. These meetings were kept in person because Kolark believed Xorian had the capability of intercepting any radio messages.

'I am not happy with this, but at least we have got some success.' Maharaj said. He was well settled in his chair. The room was poorly lit. It reflected the mood of the people present there.

'But now Maharaj and others should change the place. We cannot sit in the capital city of Alpha Heptad. Let's go to an insignificant place. The next target Jason would be to destroy the capital city of Alpha Heptad.' Kolark telepathized to all. He was nursing the upper arm of his left hand, which was still paining a lot. He had to sever his hand to escape the detection.

'But we have destroyed the capital city of Lux Fulgor.' Jyoti was not happy with this destruction. She could easily feel that there would be rebel sentiments in the Fleshy. The trap could be set anywhere. Why destroy the main city of Fleshy.

'There was a purpose for that. If we had kept it somewhere else that many soldiers would not have followed the trail. Given that it was an important city made, the Nonpareil Soldiery sent many soldiers.' Param Guru, over teleconferencing, tried to comfort Jyoti.

'No. This is not correct logic.' Yogi Raj intervened. Generally, he was a quiet spectator. 'If that is the case, then the capital of Alpha Heptad would have been the best choice.'

'What are you alleging, Yogi Raj.' Maharaj said in an authoritative tone.

'I am saying you have taken Fleshy for granted. Though I am not the head of State of Lux Fulgor, it was a Fleshy country. The majority of citizens there are Fleshy, and you have chosen to destroy it because you want to kill two birds with one stone. Dent the Fleshy pride in the guise of destroying the enemy.' Yogi Raj said and looked at the head of State of Lux Fulgor.

'I agree with Yogi Raj.' Jayesh said for the first time. He was the head of the state of Lux Fulgor.

'That is not true, Jayesh. We have to act fast. We could not have used any other place. Lux Fulgor's capital was chosen because it was the only place where we could kill a maximum of Nonpareil Soldiers without damaging the civilian establishment much.' Jyoti defended the strategy.

'If that is so commander in chief, Jyoti, why have you not consulted me.' Jayesh was rebelling openly.

'Because we were under a time constraint. The Nonpareil Soldiers have sniffed the trail of Kolark's device. We had to act quickly. The nuclear bomb had to be set. And geographically, the Lux Fulgor is far from the facility established by the alien. In this way, we can attract many soldiers because they thought that Kolark would be there with his armoured macabre, and thus, they would send soldiers there. These are all strategic games. We must live with collateral damages.' Jyoti commented.

'More so given that Jyoti is commander–in–chief, I don't think anyone should doubt her integrity. She doesn't decide based on race or based on some stupid book.' Maharaj was furious.

All of Fleshy standing there did not like Maharaj's comment on their book. He was crossing his limits on a regular basis. But the situation was grim, and therefore they decided not to say anything.

However, Kolark could sense the tension and that Fleshy were visibly upset. He knew now enough about this planet that he could rule here. His only target was to defeat these Xorians. Also, the Acquian were a threat, and whatever signals Kolark had received from Josh, the Acquian possessed the weapon Annihilator which had the capability of destroying all on the land. This was a powerful weapon, and along with the Xorian, this also needed to be neutralized.

'This is not the time for this in-fighting.' Kolark telepathized all. 'We have to be ready. We are in the middle of the war. Destroying five Nonpareil Soldiers is no great achievement. They have already destroyed our nukes. I have my soldiers, but then our numbers are very small compared to the Xorian. So now is the time that we use the Annihilator.'

'It is ready. We can use it. But we have a deeper question.' Param Guru said in his usual baritone.

'What is it now? Param Guru, we are in serious threat. Xorian forces are destroying all of us on land. They have not attacked a single city in the

Deep Ocean, so you don't understand our plight.' Maharaj was getting frustrated with the in-fight he was seeing amongst his local planet folks.

'Maharaj, I understand your frustration. But suppose we use our weapon, Annihilator, and destroy the alien facilities, but still what. The aliens who are let loose will keep on attacking. Have we assessed their total number, and do we have a plan?' Param Guru countered.

'We indeed have. Don't you ever doubt the Merkels!' Kolark intervened. He was also fed up with Param Guru's air of superiority.

'Then it would be better that we all know it.' Param Guru said.

'See Param Guru, you are under the wrong impression or if I may use a harsher word, 'fool's paradise' that Acquians are safe. Your notion that Xorian is not Acquian's problem because it is for the land-trotters to deal with them is mistaken. Your belief might have stemmed from the fact that in past periods Xorian has attacked only the land-trotters and captured their stock of Antium. The Nonpareil Soldiers are singing only the land-trotter's city that too mostly in Heous.' Kolark telepathized in a harsh tone.

No one had dared to talk to the Acquian supreme commander in such a fashion. Param Guru was very well respected by even the Heous leadership. But Kolark was far more powerful. They all knew if there was anyone who could withstand the Xorian threat, it was Kolark. They had no option but to listen to him.

'I am under no such impression Kolark.' Param Guru responded in a furious tone.

'You better be not.' Kolark didn't give a damn about these evolved fishes. 'Xorian are going to find out very soon that there is Industrium in Deep Ocean. It is quite possible that Industrium in the deep ocean is more suitable for the material as it is a unique material. The Industrium hitherto used for making Indpro is similar to what is available on the land of Eritrea. But the Industrium available in the Deep Ocean may be more suitable for propeller manufacturing. If that happens, Xorian would simply leave the land and attack the deep ocean. Remember, your weapon Annihilator, cannot be of any use if the Nonpareil Soldiers are wandering in the Deep Ocean. None of the land trotters can be of any help either. So, you would be all alone. Don't be again in any false notion that your super-fishes type soldiers can even face the mighty Nonpareil Soldiers for one day. Nonpareil Soldiers of Xor are trained to fight in all circumstances whether space, air, land or deep water.'

Param Guru was surprised by the tone Kolark was talking to him, and that too in front of all. But what this alien was saying was correct. But how did he know that Annihilator was of no use in Deep Ocean? This secret was much guarded. *Josh, that Fleshy. This alien has befooled me by having that Fleshy in the core team.*

'You are right, Param Guru. It is Josh who spilt the bean. But it is immaterial now. Either you listen to me, or else believe me, you will be annihilated. I know you have no weapon to even fight my soldiers leave alone the Nonpareil Soldiers. It is very easy for me to strike a deal with Xorian. Here there is a vast stock of Industrium. We shall divide it easily. We will wipe you all from the face of this planet. So if you don't want that destruction, listen to my commands. You are a leader of your folks; if you don't want to be a mere pawn in the game, commit yourself to me.' Kolark telepathized to Param Guru alone.

Param Guru had no option. This alien was far too shrewd. One who could cut his own hand could do anything. But if he was saying he could strike a deal with the Xorian, why had he not done so. Why was he supporting the in-bred? Param Guru decided not to think much along these lines. The fearless, evolved fish feared the golden skin.

'Coming back to where we were.' Kolark telepathized all.

'But what shall we do with these fire-spewing machines flying all over our air-space. They are fast and destructive.' Jyoti said in a concerned voice.

'We don't have to think about them. Our plan should be how to neutralize the Xorian. And that is only possible if Param Guru helps us.' Kolark telepathized.

'I am committed to helping.' Param Guru responded.

'Then the plan is simple. Whatever forces we have, infantry and air force, we shall attack the facilities. We shall keep on attacking incessantly. The Xorian will call the majority of Nonpareil Soldiers near the facility to safeguard. They don't want any destruction of their facilities in any which way. I also have powerful armoured soldiers to assist your force. This combined attack would let the consolidation of Nonpareil Soldiers at one place.'

'So do you think we can defeat them?' Maharaj asked.

'Not at all. They are the mighty Nonpareil Soldiers of Xor. We cannot even think of engaging them for more than one Eritrean day.' Kolark responded.

'Then. What is the purpose of this combined attack?' Jyoti was curious.

'When most of the Nonpareil Soldiers are either on land or just flying near land, at that time, Annihilator will destroy that part of the land. Most are volcanic land. Annihilator, if rightly used, can trigger some volcanic burst too.' Kolark telepathized.

Param Guru was surprised at how deep the knowledge of Kolark about the weapon of Acquian was. He couldn't help but appreciate the thorough preparation of Kolark.

'If we can destroy the majority of Nonpareil Soldiers in the process, that would be a big gain. More so, with the facilities destroyed, the purpose of Xorian presence is frustrated, and they have no option but to leave.' Kolark telepathized to all.

Param Guru and all others were truly mesmerized by how Kolark could strategize so meticulously.

'Agreed with you. You tell us when to send the command to attack the two facilities. We have identified them as Balk Zone and Liberal Zone. Because one facility is near the city of Balk and another is in the area where no one except a few Liberals wander,' Jyoti said.

'Good. We need the help of Acquians to be ready with the weapon and use it immediately when we say.' Kolark telepathized.

'We shall be following your signals, and when you say, we shall shoot the weapon.' Param Guru comforted.

'Then get ready for the fun.' Kolark concluded the meeting.

The Balk facility, which was now turned into a modern sci-fi fortress, was the place where most of the action was taking place. The factories were working incessantly, and soon the result of the hard work and humongous risk was about to deliver.

'Admirer, what is the progress.' Jason inquired. He was pacing up and down across the facility, and Admirer was walking beside him.

'We have identified and destroyed almost all the nukes of the in-bred. Their cities were now witnessing our wrath. The Antium shipbuilding is almost in its final stages. Would you like to explore the Deep Sea?' Admirer was inquisitive. Both Admirer and Jason were visiting the facility supervising the progress of the manufacture of the Antium ship.

'Not now. I don't want to dilute our presence. Both Bonita and Delice's crew are doing a great job. The shipbuilding factory is ready at both

places. And you know that we cannot establish another factory without dismantling this facility. There is no sense exploring Deep Ocean now.'

'But what if that material is better suited for our purpose.' Admirer questioned.

'We will for sure explore that also. I want to get a few ships ready and ship them to Xor and X141. So that our success is known to Supreme Commander Ralf, and he can send us more replenishment. He can then announce and commit more resources. Then we shall establish many factories. But if we go and explore the Deep Ocean and have an establishment there, then we will be diluting ourselves. We are in the middle of a war.' Jason explained.

'Ok, Jason. Just three Kels (six Earth days) or one more Eritrean day to go. We have erected the shipbuilding factory. The Antium ship's structure is also ready. The material is chemically reacted and electronically charged. Now we are in the final phase. Bonita factory is expected to deliver the first Antium ship. Then another 1 Kel Delice factory would deliver its first and our second Antium Ship. We shall then send both these to Xor and X141, respectively.' Admirer updated Jason on the progress. Jason was not wearing any armour suit.

'Then let's call our soldiers to defend these facilities.' Jason telepathized.

'But Jason's 11 and 12 division is here. We have ninety-eight Nonpareil Soldiers defending this facility.' Admirer was wondering why more soldiers were required.

'I know divisions 101 and 103 are doing a great job keeping the in-bred busy. They are incessantly firing laser shots and gamma rays on the in-bred. The inbred has no clue how to engage them. But something tells me that in-bred now are behind our facilities. The attack on our defence system was in furtherance of that purpose. We have Mayhem and can destroy the in-bred anytime, but it is better than right now. Till we manufacture and ship these two Antium ships, we should protect our facilities. I don't trust Kolark one bit. I don't know what he is up to. And he also now has our armoured suits. Though those macabre are no match to our soldiers,' still I want to be doubly sure.' Jason was constantly in fear.

'If you permit, then shall I ask Mayhem to be deployed and destroy the main Satrap of Heous, the Alpha Heptad.' Admirer enquired.

'Can you manage Mayhem with just five Nonpareil Soldiers.' Jason counter-questioned.

'Yes, Jason. I, along with five Nonpareil Soldiers, will carry Mayhem and cause huge destruction on Alpha Heptad. The inbred will be busy defending their home; they had no time to even think about attacking our facilities.'

'Ok, take Mayhem and five Nonpareil Soldiers and attack the capital city of Alpha Heptad. Also, destroy everything in that province except the stockpiles of Antium.' Jason ordered.

At the edge of Heous land, the huge army of Angelans, Centaurs and Fleshy had gathered. The vast sea separated them from the Balk land. The army was ready to march and sit inside the twenty huge battleships. The tanks, helicopters, and jets all were getting ready and were hosted by the mega battleships. Jyoti was overseeing the process, and she was sitting inside a helicopter which was hovering just above so that she had full view. Though Angelans flight comes naturally, still, Jyoti had decided to use a helicopter.

'We are ready, Kolark. The ships would soon cross the sea separating Green Land to Heous Land.' Jyoti messaged Kolark. Kolark was still at some anonymous place. He was always at some place on the planet that no one knew.

'Good; once you cross the sea, attack immediately on the two facilities from land, air and water.' Kolark ordered. He had now picked up the language that was spoken by the in-bred. Though his telepathic ability was enough to communicate, still, at times, he spoke with the in-bred in their language. As per Kolark, it gave a better connect.

'But where are your soldiers. Your soldiers are the most key here. We were waiting for them.' Jyoti asked.

'No, not now. First, you attack. My soldiers will come into the picture later. We shall attack the enemy once they are convinced that it is only in-bred attacking them. This will make them a bit complacent, and then at an opportune time, we will intervene.' Kolark cut the connection. He didn't want to entertain Jyoti further than this. Kolark had given orders, and the in-bred had to follow them.

Jyoti was surprised. She never trusted the golden-skinned alien. But she had no choice. She ordered her army to proceed. Soon the twenty battleships and around fifty jets left the shores of Heous Land.

The sophisticated ships with a maximum speed of twenty-eight knots reached the Green Land shore in less than half a day. The infantry marched and soon surrounded the area near the hills. The alien facility was not far from the infantry's striking distance.

'What are our instructions?' asked one general who was in charge of a division of infantry.

'Attack. Air Force, Infantry all…' Jyoti commanded.

She was sitting in a battle tank almost 2 um (Two kilometres) from the war zone. There was a fighter jet above to guard her. The forces were directed to attack, and the infantry and air force had gone ahead, knowing fully well that they were on a suicidal mission. The armour of the alien couldn't be penetrated, and the counterfire caused huge damage to them.

The attack was easily defended by the Nonpareil Soldiers, and they soon went on the offensive, killing all the attackers by singling them out. Nonpareil Soldiers had sophisticated instruments. They were now targeting individual soldiers and killing them irrespective of whether they were in the air or on land. The attack had failed. The battleships, which were firing missiles, were destroyed too. The soldiers could not go back now. They were to fight and die.

The Heous army was fighting hard. They, though, were no match but still were trying their level best to fight back. The jets were firing bullets and shots, but the flying Nonpareil Soldiers would either dodge them or, even if they were hit, it hardly caused any harm.

Jyoti was watching it from a distance. She felt dejected over this one-sided affair. She wondered where were the soldiers of that cunning alien. He said he would support it. When Jyoti was about to curse the alien, she saw one Nonpareil Soldier hit, and his armour penetrated, and he lost his life. The soldier fell down with a big thud. The macabre of the alien had come to rescue and was shooting at the Nonpareil Soldiers from behind. One after another, five Nonpareil Soldiers were destroyed by those macabre. It brought a smile to the otherwise dejected face of Jyoti.

The Nonpareil Soldiers immediately messaged back and, on command of Jason, retreated to the facility.

'There is huge damage to us. We lost 1000+ of our soldiers.' One commander reported to Jyoti. Jyoti was now out of the tank flying on her wings almost half a kilometre above in the air and trying to look at the war scene.

'But I feel that we have destroyed five Nonpareil Soldiers. In total, we have killed ten Nonpareil Soldiers of the mighty Xorian.' Jyoti replied.

'Yes, commander.'

Suddenly Jyoti's mobile communicator rang. It was a hotline message from Maharaj.

'Jyoti, we are in a terrible mess. Almost full of the Alpha Heptad has been destroyed. I am running to save my life.'

'What, Maharaj? Have the aliens' attack increased?'

'Yes, Jyoti. They have used a very powerful weapon, and it has destroyed our country in no time. Our soldiers, civilians, our establishment, everything is destroyed and finished.'

'Shall I return back with our soldiers?' Jyoti was perturbed.

'No, Jyoti. I am saying our only hope is you now. You must destroy those facilities. We have nothing left, but the aliens should also not be successful. Destroy the facilities.'

'Yes, Maharaj, I am very near to destroying the facility. Now all the Nonpareil Soldiers are here. It is time for Param Guru to initiate the Annihilator.'

'I will message him immediately.' Maharaj said and disconnected.

'Param Guru, are you ready.' Maharaj called him immediately and shouted.

'Sorry, Maharaj, I am not ready. You are all alone.' Param Guru was callous.

'What? Are you betraying us?' Maharaj said in a shocking tone.

'It is not betrayal. What is there for Acquian in this? They have chosen to attack only Heous. They have not attacked us. So why shall we invite their wrath.'

'What nonsense is this? Alien will not stop. They will soon come to Ocean Bed too.'

'We will strike a deal with them. We don't mind parting away with a little bit of black stone. We don't want our peace to be destroyed.'

'Param Guru, are you out of your mind. We all have decided on a strategy. You can't walk away like this at the last moment.'

'I am sorry, Maharaj. We Acquians had a detailed meeting yesterday, and it was decided that we don't want to face the fury of aliens. They only want the black stone. Mostly maybe they want the black stone of the land trotters. Why shall we get involved? We can buy peace simply by abiding by the directions of the alien. We can, at best, pray to the

Ocean God that your sufferings end soon.' Param Guru disconnected the connection.

Maharaj was shocked by this betrayal. They had put their everything into ensuring that all the Nonpareil Soldiers were within the two facilities area so that Annihilator could kill the majority of them. Maharaj immediately contacted Kolark.

'I was always sceptical of those fishes.' Kolark responded.

'But now what to do.' Maharaj was puzzled.

'It is alright. What Param Guru doesn't know is that I had already planned something which doesn't need the help of those fishes.' Kolark growled.

It was like a ray of hope for Maharaj. This alien was saying that they still could win and defeat the mighty Xorian.

'What is the plan, Kolark?' Maharaj was eager to know.

'Well, you just engage them thoroughly. I want your dedicated Air Force who are ready to commit suicide.' Kolark replied.

'But our Air Force under the command of Jyoti is already fighting. What do you mean by committing suicide?

'I want them to simply at the highest speed crash at the site from all directions. I want all of them to attack from all directions.'

'It won't help much. The speed of the alien soldiers is extremely fast; they will destroy our planes before they land.'

'I know, but this would just be camouflage.'

'Camouflage for what.'

'You do as I say. Just ensure that all these planes from all directions, all missiles that you have everything that can fly crash lands at the site. Ask your Angelan foot soldiers, too, to fly with a bomb and crash land at the site. I know the Nonpareil Soldiers guarding the facility will kill each and every one of them, but behind this would be my soldiers who shall be targeting a few Nonpareil Soldiers. We need just one small chink in the armour in their tremendous fortification. Because now they don't have the defence of airborne buckler, thus the soldiers have to defend it without sophisticated help. This is our only chance. We want some vulnerability in the defence. The moment we have that, I have an absolutely brilliant attack.'

'I can't understand anything. But you rest assured, all our Angelan soldiers who can fly will drop the bomb with all their four hands. Also, all the jets and commercial passenger planes that we have will be used for crashing at the site, and we shall also use all missiles that we have.

There are some 180 Nonpareil Soldiers guarding the facility, and we have around 1000 plus planes, many missiles and many thousand Angelans and Centaurs ready to die. We shall attack from all directions.' Maharaj said avoiding the Fleshy, who would contribute much by flying the jet and commercial planes.

'Good. But before you plan this attack, ensure that your machines which create loud noise, are also there. I want the place near the facility to be completely surrounded by noise, lots of vibration if possible, and too many microwave rays. Just ensure that the Nonpareil Soldiers are totally lost in the melee.'

'Ok. Will ensure that.'

'Can you check with your meteorology department that there is any forecast of heavy rain and thunder near the facility?' Kolark suddenly asked.

'I don't know what your plan is, but seriously you think that Nonpareil Soldiers who are many times faster than our fastest jets, with such strong reflexes, can be defeated by flying Angelan with a bomb in four hands, rushing Centaurs with blaster and mini cannons, flying jet planes and commercial plane which are many time slower. And on top of it, you want the rain God to simply pour. I doubt these things will impact the Nonpareil Soldiers at all.'

'I know Maharaj, these things can be easily countered by them. But for countering, they have to concentrate on these attacks. First, the Angelan will fly, then the jets and commercial planes, and then centaurs running from all directions, so these all will create a lot of disturbance in Nonpareil Soldiery. Then your sound, vibration and rays will impact their ability to judge all attacks. We need just one small vulnerability. Even my soldiers armed in the armour of Nonpareil Soldiers would be there. It is possible that in this melee, few may sneak in. Then you see they can destroy the facility from the ground.'

'This is your plan. You want to create this kind of camouflage so that you can sneak in a few of your soldiers. They will go and destroy the facility.' Maharaj was trying to understand the plan.

'No, Maharaj, it is not that simple. But don't worry about it. You just do as I said. Tell Jyoti to arrange it and then have one last fight. I am going to dive into the Deep Ocean. I have to meet this Param Guru. I shall be back soon.' Kolark disconnected and started his journey towards the Deep Ocean.

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## CHAPTER 17

# First Eritrean War – End Game

Kolark was draped in the Nonpareil Soldier armour, and along with him was Ola, with appropriate protection for ocean travel, who was in an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle (AUV) provided by the Heous administration. Kolark, in the armour, can easily sail through to the deepest ocean, and soon he reached the Ocean bed where he saw the wonderful city of Vivo in the country of Lenogue. It was a beautiful city which was an engineering marvel. Each building was a work of art and wonderful artificial lights, and each building's beauty was enhanced when reflected on the canals made of the still ocean water crisscrossing the city. Its magical scenery was fascinating and breathtaking at first sight, evoking the feeling of entering the setting of a real-life fairy tale. The city was made to suit the Acquian lifestyle; many Acquian citizenries were floating across the city's canals. There was a quick transport facility made so that people in a hurry could use these commercial electronic boats to transport across the city. There were no private cars or vehicles, and everyone was ordained to use public transport. The shops and marketplaces were visible from the top. However, when he reached further near, he saw one sub-marine and a few Acquian guards with guns tied across their shoulders approaching him.

'Who are you?' shouted the guard.

'I am Kolark. I want to meet Param Guru.' Responded Kolark. The guard felt as if someone spoke to him in his mind.

'We can't allow you to enter the territory of Lenogue. Where is your permission?' the guard shouted back in Acquian language.

'I am in a bit of a hurry.' Kolark fired a shot from a blaster attached to the hand of the armour. The guard lay dead. Immediately Kolark fired at the submarine and other guards. In no time, the fight was over, and the first line of defence was all dead for the Acquian city of Vivo.

'You are a smart fighter.' Ola was impressed.

'Well, if you were wearing this armour, you would also have destroyed these lowly people.' Kolark responded.

Kolark swam down towards the city, and Ola also followed in his AUV. He was trying very hard to match the speed of Kolark despite being in one of the latest and most modern AUVs.

Soon the news of the invasion reached the Vivo administration, and the second defence system with fighter ships and many Acquian soldiers were there. Kolark was in no mood to waste time, and he had decided to just kill them all. But before he could fire, a friendly voice shouted:

'You don't have to do this. You could have called me directly.' It was Param Guru in one of the underwater ships.

'Good. Let's meet at some quiet place.' Kolark responded.

'We have received a message from an in-bred, a Fleshy. He wants to meet you.' Admirer reported to Jason.

'I don't want to meet these in-bred. I don't have time. We need to quickly finish the manufacture of the ships.' Jason was irritated that Admirer brought all such innocuous things also for his attention.

'But he says he can commit the entire fighter jets at our command. He says the Lux Fulgor province wants to support us as well as the entire Fleshy race.'

'Why do we need their support? We are doing well, and we are almost so near to making the ship. Once a ship is ready and we send it successfully to Xor and X141, we will get huge replenishment. We can control this planet with our own strength.'

'That's true, Jason. But what is the harm in having support? Because we are outnumbered here. We have seen that the in-bred are showing good resistance. They have killed almost 12 Nonpareil Soldiers till now. They have the support of Merkelite too. So, it is not advisable to reject such friendly gestures so callously.' Admirer gave suggestions as a true advisor.

'Ok. Bring him in.' Jason was not interested in arguing further. Otherwise, also he was waiting for the Antium ship to be constructed. No harm in meeting the in-bred. Jason felt that days were very long in Eritrea. It is better if he indulged with the in-bred, maybe he could divert his attention to something else, and it may relax his anxiety.

'My name is Golian. I work with the Air Force, and I am under the command of Captain Josh. I have a simple proposal. We, the Fleshy, control almost all the fighter jets. We are the pilot. If you give us the commitment that our country Lux Fulgor shall not be attacked by you and you will protect us from any attack, we shall give you the commitment to not only tell you about the black stone stock but also abide by your command. We can even help you in controlling this planet.' Josh responded.

'But you are from Alpha Heptad. Why do you want to safeguard Lux Fulgor?'

'We Fleshy will then shift to Lux Fulgor. We shall make our home there. It is now long that we take revenge for our dishonour for ages. We will keep the Angelans and Centaurs as our slaves.'

'See, I am not interested in your stupid proposals. I don't need your help. But if you want to serve us, you better tell us about the alien who is helping you. If you give me his coordinate and help me catch him, I can think about sparing your lives.' Jason was at his arrogant best.

'I can give you that alien. I know where he is. But you have to send some soldiers with me. Because the alien also has a lot of powerful soldiers.' Golian suggested.

'Admirer and her five Nonpareil Soldiers will come with you. Remember, Admirer and her soldiers have just returned from Alpha Heptad after destroying almost the entire province. It has taken her no time for the same. So, if you somehow plan to betray, remember Lux Fulgor will be wiped out from the face of this planet Eritrea.'

'I have no such plans.'

'Ok. Admirer, you and five of your soldiers follow him. Go and get that Kolark. I want him to be finished. We have forced him to sever his one hand now; he will behead himself.'

Golian then came out of the facility and reached towards his Jet, which was allowed to land on the facility. Golian had a good look, and the Jet had cameras which recorded the facility. The defence system was down for the Xorian, and thus they could not realize that the Jet and Golian had recorded each and every moment of the facility. It was understood that the other facility also would have been modelled on the same lines. Golian flew with his jet and was followed by Admirer, who was now in her armoured suit and five other Nonpareil Soldiers. Soon they all flew and reached the Alpha Heptad, where the destruction was writ large.

Before Admirer and her soldiers could understand anything, they were attacked by the macabre, around fifteen in the number who were also in Nonpareil Soldiers' armour. But the Nonpareil soldiers were highly trained, and in no time, the macabre had to retreat and run away. Fortunately for them, they managed to run away without any casualties.

'Admirer, we should not waste time in pursuing those soldiers. Let's just get in.' Golian messaged Admirer through his communicator. Golian had already landed his plane and was now getting out of it.

'Ok.' Admirer ordered her five soldiers to land, and all of them started following Golian.

Golian took them inside a dark, moist cave. Admirer and the Nonpareil Soldiers could see in any environment, and everyone went inside. Golian switched on the flashlight and was leading the way. Golian went inside, and slowly they were inside the deep cave.

'Where are you taking us?' Admirer was suspicious.

'Kolark is on the other side of this cave.' Golian responded.

'Why can't we simply fly to that side? We could have then drilled a hole if Kolark is beneath.' Admirer was frustrated more so with herself that she was following orders of this dunderhead.

'Yes, we could have, but it would have alerted him. He has a special technology that he can beam himself at any other place. You would not have found him. Now he would not know that we are after him.'

'What would he not know? His soldiers have attacked us. They would have messaged him.'

'But still, he would not know that you know this secret passage. We are now very near him.'

'I doubt every statement of yours. But still, I will follow you.'

'You don't worry. We are now near. You all remain alert.'

'We are always alert.' Admirer can't believe she was in this deep cave with this stupid inbred.

They finally reached the other side of the deep cavern. Golian opened a secret door and climbed up, and slowly the Admirer and all Nonpareil Soldiers came up. They were in some kind of room.

'Welcome, Xorian.' Kolark's pre-recorded message played on a video screen.

Admirer understood it was a trap. She and her soldiers are trapped inside some kind of cave which it seems cannot be broken. Golian pressed a button, and a huge explosion happened. It seems as if many powerful

bombs exploded. The explosion was potent enough to penetrate the armour of Nonpareil Soldiery. The inbred had used their best to trap and kill the Nonpareil Soldiers. This must be the brainchild of Kolark, who had calculated the precise amount of explosive and explosion required to penetrate the armours of Nonpareil Soldiery.

'Admirer!!!' Jason immediately received the message from Admirer of the trap and their destruction. Jason couldn't believe he had lost his most trusted aide. He was furious. Kolark had played his cards well and had caused immense damage to Xorian cause. But now was not the time to repent. He had to manage the show without Admirer. He wished the Eritrean day had just passed, and miraculously the ships got ready.

'I am sorry, Kolark. I was scared. I don't want to fight either Xorian or you. We want to live peacefully in Ocean. We are not connected to land trotters.' Param Guru said in an apologetic tone.

'I don't know what has happened that such a martial race like the Acquians are talking like Fleshy. This was not expected of you. Remember, the Xorians have not only disrespected the land trotters but you all.' Kolark telepathized.

'I know. But we have understood their might. Alpha Heptad is nothing but ashes now. It was such a thriving country. When the most powerful country in the land cannot withstand them, we don't want to fight them out. We are happy in the sea.'

'Is this the only reason?' Kolark telepathized cunningly.

'Yes.' Param Guru snapped.

'Well, if you think I am also like those land-trotters, then you are absolutely wrong. I know that you have been approached by the Xorians. You have already given them the black stone dug from the Ocean bed. This is a high-quality black stone. Xorians already have entered a trade with you.'

'This is not true.' Param Guru did not know how this well-kept secret was out. How Kolark knew all this.

'I know this because the person who came to you to do the deal was not a Xorian but a macabre. I wanted to test which is a better quality of Industrium. You stupid fish. It was my soldier. And to your surprise, the Industrium at Ocean Deep is far better quality than that of land.'

Param Guru was stunned at this revelation. This alien was far more shrewd and cunning than they ever had thought. He was beyond control.

'You are right.' Kolark was extremely bitter. 'I need to just pass on this information to Xorians. Rest they will do my work. They will come and capture the Ocean Deep and not the land. They will establish their base here. Mayhem will be used to destroy the beautiful ocean cities and not the land.'

'No, I beg of you.' Param Guru, for the first time, had felt so helpless. He was almost begging Kolark.

'Where is Josh?' Kolark demanded.

'Bring Josh.' Param Guru gave a command to his subordinate. Josh was captured and tortured by the Acquians. Soon Josh was produced before them. He was decrepit and was brought by two soldiers holding him for either side. It seemed he was brutally tortured by the Acquian.

'I am taking Josh away with me. He has been a loyal servant to me, and I don't want my people to meet such a fate. Next time remember this. If someone is helping my cause, don't you ever dare touch that person?' Kolark was threatening.

'Mistake will never be repeated.' Param Guru appeared like a dejected and lost king.

'And now you initiate your Annihilator. This shall work immediately at my signal. My assistant will be here, and he will be in charge of Annihilator.' Kolark looked at Ola, and he was ready to oblige. After all, he had seen in all these times the power Kolark commanded.

Kolark and Josh left the place and were soon reaching the land. Param Guru was left with no choice but to take Ola, who was in his ocean suit, to the secret chamber from where the Annihilator was controlled.

'Sir, there is a lot of vibration, as if some Earthquake is coming.' One soldier reported to Jason.

'This is not natural. It is artificially created.' Jason was petrified. He guessed that Kolark was now going to destroy the facility.

'Sir, what are our orders.' The soldier asked politely.

'Try to pack up. Get away from here; all these attacks from the top are mere camouflage. Their real plan was to attack from beneath. Can we move the facility?'

'No sir, we cannot. The shipbuilding is at the last moment. We cannot dismantle it all and take it away.'

In the meantime, the Earthquake had become severe.

'Then order all the soldiers to run away from this place. Our facility is destroyed.' Jason commanded.

But before Jason could understand anything, he was surrounded by another attack from the top. There were lots of attacks from the top. Many fighter planes, Angelan, Centaurs etc., were coming from all directions and blasting it out. There was huge noise and vibration, which was not allowing the Nonpareil Soldiers to communicate effectively. More so, the Earthquake had become severe, and the facility was crumbling. It seemed that the land was divided into two.

Jason understood that he had lost the battle. His graveyard was ready. He had to leave and run away. But with no Savitra65 star ships and the facility getting destroyed, what can he do on this stupid planet. Better die here in the battleground.

'Hi, Jason.' Kolark telepathized him while standing in front of him.

'Kolark, you are here.' Jason could not believe what he was seeing. On the one hand, everything was crumbling and getting destroyed; on the other, his nemesis was in front of him.

'Jason, nothing is lost. You join me. I am here to save you.'

'I no businessman or capitalist. Get lost before I kill you.' Jason was furious.

'You are a better warrior than I; you can kill me. But we both are stranded on this planet. I am here for business; you can still be here for your revenge and pride. Don't you want to take revenge from the in-bred for failing you and more so for failing Ralf?' Kolark was shrewd.

'I did not lose to in-bred; I lost to you, Kolark. You are the one who created this Earthquake.'

'No, Jason. This is done by the Acquian. Your biggest problem was your impatience. You very quickly decided to establish a factory here. And you committed both the resources here. You should instead try one in Deep Ocean. I have checked that the 'Industrium' in the deep ocean is far better quality.'

'I don't believe you.'

'Don't believe me. I am saying, please save yourself. You are a wonderful general and commander. You should be in Mayo Corporation. Join me. We shall work together. You work for your pride, and I for profit motive.'

'No, I refuse.'

'Ok. Then just let me save you. You decide later what you want to do. I cannot let a top general like you to this peril. Please allow me at least this much.'

Jason was confused. On the one hand, he saw all the structures falling down with huge destruction; on the other hand, his nemesis wanted to save his life. What an irony?

'All soldiers fly away. The land is crumbling. You all leave and go to a safe distance. Keep your communication with me on.' Jason commanded all his soldiers.

'Come, Jason. This is the right decision.' Kolark telepathized.

Soon almost a hundred Nonpareil Soldiers and fifteen Macabre were approaching Acquian land. The Vivo city was soon going to host the alien.

'Welcome, Kolark and Jason.' Param Guru said in a welcoming tone.

'You know we are not here for this hospitality. We need that you allow us your land where there is a huge stockpile of 'Industrium'. We shall make the facility there.' Kolark commanded.

'That will be arranged. As discussed, we have created a separate country for you. This can be the alien land from where you can operate.' Param Guru responded.

'Ok. You have been a great help, Param Guru.' Kolark praised him.

Soon Ola, who was in the Acquian land, also came to meet Kolark. They all visited the ocean bed with a huge stock of Industrium.

'But Kolark, how will you use this material. My facility to develop the Antium Ship is destroyed' Jason was confused.

'I still have the Embracer 1. You and your soldier enjoy the hospitality of this place; I shall soon reach Shia and get the machinery for making the facility for Antium ship.' Kolark responded.

'No, I will also come with you.' Jason demanded.

'Why do you want to come? Now you work for Mayo Corporation, not Xorian Ralf.' Kolark was confused.

'I don't work for anyone. It is my duty to let Supreme Commander Ralf know that the mission failed. You have helped me. Thus, I commit my Nonpareil Soldiers to you. You can have them. But I shall come with

you, and then I will be ready to take whatever punishment Supreme Commander Ralf has for me.'

'Ok, Jason. I am okay with this. I will take you to Shai. From there, you can go to Xor.'

'I appoint Josh and Ola, my representatives here. All the macabre and the Nonpareil Soldiers shall abide by their decision until I return.'

'Param Guru, you arrange a meeting with all the leaders and call them to Vivo.'

'Ok, Kolark.'

'My Nonpareil Soldiers and macabre, you all shall stay in this new country. You have to safeguard the stockpile of Industrium till I return. You all shall listen to Ola, whom I have nominated as Joint Governor of Eritrea along with Josh.'

Soon everybody was summoned.

'Dear all, the fight is over. Xorian has conceded defeat, and my friend Jason is leaving this planet. Though I shall be coming back to Eritrea. Till I return, my soldiers shall stay in the land identified at the Ocean Bed. Though they shall be free to roam around Eritrea at their will. The leader in Deep Ocean, till I return, shall be Ola, and on land, it shall be Captain Josh. Everyone must listen to them. They are the Governors of this planet, Eritrea. They are free to decide upon any matter.' Kolark summed up.

'But there is huge damage of Alpha Heptad. We need to repair it.' Maharaj said politely.

'See, if the locals here don't deny us the material Industrium, we are not here to trouble you. In fact, I promise that I will give you technological know-how to repair this planet even better.' Kolark responded.

Kolark only wanted to get Industrium, but he has not only got the mother lode of Industrium but also an entire planet which hosts such intelligent life. He can think of new possibilities for business. Not only can he establish an Indpro factory here, but he also can reap rich dividends.

'Interesting. But I don't understand one thing. If Ralf comes to know about it and even the Merkel Administration, why the Merkels will not take over the planet Eritrea.' Dharma enquired.

'That's true, Dharma; you have raised the right query.' Tara telepathized.

'Then why Kolark is taking Jason with him. It will spill the beans.'

'You are correct, Dharma. But whether Jason comes or not, in any case, the Merkels will come to know about Eritrea. See, Ralf knows that he has sent a ship to Eritrea. If there is no response in a reasonable time, it means the mission has failed. He would definitely send another mission there. As regards Shai or Merkel coming to know, that cannot be stopped. Because Kolark doesn't have the technology to make the Indpro ships. He would need to hire engineers for that, and once the facility is established there, it would be a no-brainer that Eritrea has so much Industrium. At that time also, Merkel can take it over.'

'I don't understand. Why Kolark spent so much time and effort on this? What does he gain out of it?'

'See, like the asteroids were sold to Felanie. Likewise, Kolark can enter into a legal agreement with the Shai government. Kolark is within the suzerainty of Shai. As per Shai rules, what Kolark need is permission to use the planet Eritrea which was spotted by him and controlled by him. The Shai doesn't care about the richness of Felanie. Felanie is not their citizen. If Kolark gives enough monetary cuts to the Shai government, he gets the legal right to mine the planet Eritrea. Shai government is an autonomous government, but it is under the direct protection of Merkels. Thus, Kolark doesn't lose anything. In fact, by helping Jason, he got what he wanted. He got the Nonpareil Soldiers. They will defend the planet for him. Also, he got Josh, who was saved by him, so he is loyal to Kolark. All his moves were calculative.'

'Understood. Kolark is a brilliant person.' Dharma just can't help appreciating him. He continued, 'I am eager to know what transpired next.'

'Tara, you need to end this soon.' Professor Boro telepathized.

'What happened? Do the Nonpareil Soldiers land on Mazol?' Dharma enquired.

'Not yet, Dharma. As rightly suggested by you, they are not yet here. They might be searching for us in the nearby vicinity. But we don't know when they will come here.' Boro responded.

'Then what happened.' Tara enquired.

'The Supporters have killed Governor Kor in Eritrea. Nokoevid is angry. Further, it seems he has directed the Nonpareil Soldiery to comb Mazol in any case.' Boro telepathized. 'I have just received the message from my source in Eritrea.'

'What to do now, Dharma. We have to run away. Your plan that the Nonpareil Soldiery will not step on Mazol has not worked.' Tara telepathized.

'It is okay. Now we need to plan something else.' Dharma said.

'Are you planning to take them head-on?' Boro enquired.

'Kind of.' Dharma said thoughtfully.

'This misadventure would cost us our lives.' Boro was sceptical.

'But we have no option. Tell me one thing whether the starship Janak 290 can travel as fast as the Nonpareil Soldiers starship.' Dharma seemed to have weaved some kind of plan.

'Yes. We use the HTM propellers, which the Nonpareil Soldiery will use. But we can run out of fuel in ten Tymlight; I am not sure about theirs.' Boro responded.

'If I am not mistaken, the distance between Eritrea and Mazol also is ten Tymlight approximately.' Dharma asked.

'Yes, but we cannot go to Eritrea. As Nokoevid is there, the security would be very high. We would be stopped at the outer orbit post. Before entering Eritrea, we would be in prison.' Boro was tired of answering all these silly questions.

'No, I am not planning to go Eritrea. I just want to create an illusion in the mind of the Nonpareil Soldiery that we have gone to Eritrea. Maybe one of our starships can move in Eritrean direction, and we shall all go have a round of the black hole and come back to Mazol. In the meantime, the Nonpareil Soldiery may comb for us and will leave if they don't find us.' Dharma suggested.

'Your plan is not bad. But what if the Nonpareil Soldiers don't leave till we return then.' Boro suggested.

'Ok. Then you tell me do we have the capability of surviving on any of the moons of this planet for a short while.'

'No, the moons here are barren. Except for Mazol, other planets, too, cannot host us. They are not in any habitable zone. The only option is that we leave in our starship, go to some distance and spend time in space and return.' Boro responded.

'Then let's do one thing, we shall work on the weapon you were planning to make. Let us first try to forge that weapon. Educate me about it.' Dharma said firmly.

'What?' Boro got surprised.

'Yes. Now is the time to take the Nonpareil Soldier head on.' Dharma suggested.

'Ok. Then let's move from here in our Janak 290, and on the starship, I shall explain to you about the weaponry.' Boro suggested.

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## CHAPTER 18

# Dharma getting prepared for the War

'The weapon used by Nokoevid is highly destructive and precise. It can be trained at a target and shall destroy that only. No shield or armour can prevent it.' Boro telepathized while on the starship Janak 290, which had taken off and now crossing the Mazolian atmosphere, which was around 2500 um. (2500 Kilometers Earth standard). It was a highly sophisticated starship. They all were at present cruising at high speed and going in an unknown direction. The Maen drive was about to get initiated.

'I learnt from the first Eritrean War story that already the capability of heavy destruction existed with Xorian. But still, I am longing to learn what Nokoevid created; it seems that it would be something dangerous and extreme.' Dharma responded in an ecstatic tone while he was constantly mesmerized by the beauty of Janak 290. He couldn't fathom how it would be in Anion ships which were even more exotic than this absolutely majestic vehicle.

'Yes, Dharma. Nokoevid discovered an energy which none of us has ever discovered. It seems this energy existed at the beginning of Muverse. This energy is the one which is responsible for keeping the galaxy intact. It is so powerful that if you disturb it, the entire galaxy, if not the Muverse, will be brought to nought.' Boro was very serious.

'Are you serious? One weapon to destroy the entire galaxy.' Dharma could not believe it.

'Yes. This is the weapon Nokoevid used to blackmail the entire Tymex. He alone knows about this.' Boro said.

'I need to learn about this in detail.' Dharma's tone indicated both anxiety and ignorance.

'You have gained knowledge which was elusive for all of us during your stint at Earth. Now you must use your expertise and decipher the elusive Quaintium.' First time Boro looked necessitous.

'Then let's use our fuel and this opportunity to decipher this energy.' Dharma said in an exciting tone.

'That is the idea. See, you have been brought up in a different universe. We believe that some of what you learnt there may be useful to decipher this.'

'I would love to help.' Dharma responded though he still had a tinge of uncertainty.

'These mystic energies attracted Nokoevid. He researched deeply and came out with the theory that there exist energies which do not behave in a particular manner. For example, gravitation forces will pull, electromagnetic waves will behave in a particular manner, and Quanion will always repel, but these energies are different. They can reverse their process, and we have not yet fathomed when and why they do so. Nokoevid is still researching on learning about them totally. These energies, if we can master them, we, the three-dimensional race, would be even superior to the seven-dimensional race Ether.'

'But then, how come you deciphered these energies when they are so mysterious and powerful. If they are the reason for the Muverse to be governed by them, then how come anyone manipulated them?'

'No Dharma, my point is that various forms of energies are hidden, but they are there in the cosmos. These energies are responsible for the cosmos and its behaviour. They are the ones who have given birth to everything, and they will destroy everything. They will unite into a singularity.'

'I understood that, Professor.'

'But we don't know what these energies are and how to decipher them. The only thing we know is that Nokoevid has somehow learnt about one of such energies. These energies can alter space-time. One theory is that these energies interact with each other at times, and they create these wormholes which alter the space-time fabric of Muverse.'

'I am not very sure about what you are saying, but to sum up, there are some energies which existed from the beginning of time. They are the ones who will ultimately end up in a singularity when everything ends. These are the energies which, when interacting with each other, create the wormholes, which Merkelite or Mayo Corporation has expertise in traversing.'

'Yes, Dharma. But the question is about these energies. We came to know about them when Nokoevid—to take revenge—came to Eritrea. He, by force, took us over. The Merkels complained to Tymex but to no avail. He also experimented with the newfound energy, and that's how the portal to your universe was artificially created around one Heaur (1.5 trillion km) from Eritrea, but it disturbed the fabric of the Eritrean stellar system.'

'The experiment of Nokoevid made him realize that this energy is extremely lethal and destructive. It has the potential to annihilate the entire stellar system if not the galaxy.' Dharma intervened.

'Yes. It also established a fear of Nokoevid in the mind of everyone. With this weapon, Nokoevid is now invincible. Mighty Thyzer or Merkels are no match. This gave rise to the despotic rule of Nokoevid. He now was not in requirement of 'Antium' because they had discovered Quanion Super Space Way and Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta propellers. But just for the sake of revenge, he captured Eritrea and tortured Fleshy the most.'

'But why will Nokoevid torture only Fleshy.'

'Dear on-boarders, we are switching on the G-shield. Sorry for the inconvenience. Acceleration mode on.' The starship Janak 290 was announced.

'What is this? Dharma asked.

Tara put her hands lightly on the shoulders of Dharma and telepathized. 'Dharma. These machines are not merely machines. They are like pseudo-living beings. They can thwart the majority of dangers on their own. They can even sense dangers at the time and will be alert. These super-luminal ships are extraordinary.'

'That is extraordinary.' Dharam responded.

'This is nothing. True beauty is Bomini.'

'Bomini?' Dharma quizzed.

'In Nokoevid's fleet, his most precious space vehicle is 'Bomini'. The beauty of Bomini is that it just fits in the belt of Nokoevid. So, whenever Nokoevid wants, he can give the mental command to Bomini, and it takes the shape of a large multi-utility starship and, once the journey is over, become as small as the buckle of a belt of Nokoevid. It is an engineering masterpiece which runs on all propellers, i.e. Quanion, HTM, Radiant Coil, as well as has Indpros.'

'It seems majestic, *Didi*.'

'Yes, Dharma. In fact, Bomini saved Nokoevid's life when he was in Eritrea.'

'Nokoevid himself came to attack Eritrea.'

'Not exactly. But that is a long story. I will tell you when we are in a safe house. Right now, we must ensure we get away from these Nonpareil Soldiers.' Tara concluded.

Suddenly there was a slight thump, and the G-shield was initiated. This was required because now Janak 290 was moving to super-luminal speed. Dharma could see the exotic-looking devices and fathom that in no time, the flying beauty would cross 1C speed, the Maen drive was now on, and the Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta drive was on full throttle. The speed crossed 10C and slowly 100C. Dharma didn't realize when Janak 290 achieved the speed of 2.8 Tylight, which is 7000 times the speed of light.

'You didn't answer Prof Boro; why Fleshy?' Dharma somehow diverted his attention from getting imbibed in the majesty of this superlative machine and focused on the situation. He had to learn a lot if he had to help these people. They had very high hope for a mere human or whatever race he belonged to.

'For that, you need to know the story of the Second Eritrean War. We shall discuss that soon.' Tara intervened.

'When Tymex decreed Xorian to leave Eritrea as it officially belongs to Shai and Mishian, Nokoevid, to prove his might, used a vastly destructive weapon and destroyed the planet in the outer Eritrean stellar system. It served two purposes. First, he could do this research about the aftermath of the usage of Qued, and secondly, will create fear to ensure that Tymex and Merkels stay away from Nokoevid's plans.' Boro concluded.

'Oh. Nokoevid is a cruel ruler, then. What is Qued?' Dharma was furious.

'He is pure evil. Now he rules the Xorian Empire with an Iron fist. Even Mishian, to survive, must pay heavy taxes to Nokoevid. Now only you have the capability of emancipating us from this evil rule.' Boro continued.

'How can I? How I am connected to this.' Dharma was confused. He didn't understand how come these people who seemed so superior to him could trust such a motley being to emancipate them from such a mighty tyrant.

'You and Nokoevid have a deeper connection. In fact, your journey to Earth is based on Nokoevid's plan to capture Eritrea.' Boro telepathized.

'I am confused, Prof. Boro.' Dharma was now perplexed.

'I can understand. But don't worry. You will know about it soon.' Tara telepathized to comfort Dharma.

'But before that, we must ensure that we are in a safe place. We are being tailed by Nonpareil Soldiery. We need to ensure that we reach a safe destination.' Boro telepathized.

'What I learnt from the story of the first Eritrean War was that none of the weapons of Eritrean at that time could penetrate Nonpareil Soldiery armours. Is that the case even today?' Dharma asked inquisitively.

'Yes. But we have few weapons blaster which can penetrate, but then again, the soldier's reflexes are super strong, and it is not easy to even defeat one soldier.' Boro continued. 'But coming back to our topic, and to answer your query about Qued. Nokoevid used his newly developed weapon – the Qued or Quaintium destructor. This weapon just uses the energy which is already Omnipresent in the cosmos, and it simply triggers the space-time fabric to change its constituent, its flow, and this small change in space-time sparks the destruction.'

'It is very difficult to even visualize this destructive weapon.' Dharma said perplexedly.

'To give a simple example, just presume all these celestial bodies are floating boats on a quiet ocean. Everything is floating as per its momentum. Now suppose you hit the ocean water anywhere with a cannonball with fierce force, it would cause a ripple, and that will disturb the flow of the floating boats. This will impact all boats, but the boat near which the cannonball has struck may capsize.' Boro explained.

'I am getting the drift. Primarily what you are saying is that the fabric of space-time is disturbed by using this weapon Qued, which simply ensures that the dark energy's flow is impacted. This impacts the celestial body's movement, and thus the celestial body gets destroyed on its own. I understand that this destructor is so dangerous that it can destroy the entire space-time fabric to collapse one entire galaxy. This is a highly dangerous weapon.'

'You indeed are smart. I was trying to give you a basic example, but you have understood the core concept. The space-time fabric is maintained because of this mysterious energy everywhere in the cosmos. The absence or abundance of this energy is the primary reason why many strange phenomena occur in the cosmos. But if someone can manipulate this energy, it can cause massive destruction. Though this energy can be used for constructive purposes also. Like Nokoevid is working on this energy to create IDL travel.'

'Ok. But I don't know can I be of any help here.'

'You are the only one who can help. Though Nokoevid is an absolutely brilliant scientist, the entire purpose of your Earth sojourn was to ensure that you can learn about this mysterious energy.'

'I understand. You believe my stint at Earth would help me understand this complex concept and forge a weapon equivalent to Qued.'

'Not that simple, Dharma. But this is true that there are many common materials between Universe and Muverse, but dark energy or Quaintium is an interesting concept. In Muverse, the singularity gave rise to this huge Muverse, and those energies maintain it at present and at an opportune time, these energies will contract and become singularity again. Likewise, in your universe, the same phenomenon takes place. But interestingly, your energies are quite different from ours. Other than Zoro and you, Nokoevid and I are the only Muversian who have been to your universe.'

'You have been to our Universe'. Dharma was shocked.

'Yes. Nokoevid captured Eritrea, and I, a Professor at Louve University, was summoned to serve his team working on this Qued. Given my involvement, Nokoevid promoted me to be his deputy. It was at that time Nokoevid threatened Tymex and, to ensure he had unfettered control over Eritrea, experimented with Qued and that not only destroyed the outermost planet of Eritrean stellar system but created a wormhole which connected Fran galaxy to Earth.'

'The wormhole which Zoro used to transship me.'

'Correct. But before your advent, Nokoevid and I went through the cosmic bridge or wormhole to discover it. Because it was the first time an artificial wormhole was created.'

'That was a huge risk. Nokoevid was the Supreme Commander of the mighty Xorian Empire. He took the risk of traversing through an artificially created wormhole.' Dharma was surprised at the audacity of Nokoevid.

'But Nokoevid is a genius, and he very soon deciphered the code to traverse this wormhole, and we, for the first time, noted that by using the Quaintium energies, a portal to another Muverse can be opened. Hitherto, it was understood that cosmic bridges cannot be artificially created, and the naturally created one can connect two points in Muverse. But Nokoevid somehow discovered that we can artificially create cosmic bridges too, and they can take us anywhere like this time a portal to a new universe is created.'

'That is interesting. Nokoevid has the technology to create artificial wormholes,' Dharma remarked.

'He has, but at present, it is a work in progress. For the past one Tym, he has been trying to master this technique. He has made significant progress too.'

'But now I guess there is a problem with mathematical equations.'

'Why do you say so?' Dharma queried.

'Because, per the calculations, you must have spent one Tym period. That is around hundred Earth years. Though I guess you had spent only twenty-four years on Earth. This math doesn't add up.' Boro telepathized. He further added, 'But it is good. You are in prime youth and have come out as such a brilliant mind.'

'Thanks for the compliment. But did you enter the wormhole and reach Earth.'

'No. We rushed through this wormhole and were in a different world. Our espial instruments told us that an intelligent civilization is on your planet. This made us curious to learn about your planet, and thus we sent our espial drones. But somehow, we could not spend much time in that Muverse. We sensed some danger. This is where Bomini helped Nokoevid. Before anyone else, Bomini raised a red flag, and we returned though Bomini suffered major mangling.'

'You met with an accident.'

'No Dharma. It seems that there is some energy present in that universe which was having a peculiar influence on us. Our spaceship Bomini withstood it for some time but gave in ultimately. We had to rush back. You remember Zoro wanted to take you back earlier. This was the precise reason. Zoro knew that had he spent a long time, his spaceship would have perished in that environment.'

'But then how come I was shoved to that universe.' Dharma was even more perplexed now. Whether the people here were his supporters or enemy.

'Because the Bof says so. I never believed in Bof, but when I read it again and saw that what all was prophesized in that is coming true, I became a firm believer.' Boro telepathized in a firm tone.

'But how do you know that I am the son of God. Who are my real parents?' There were many questions doing rounds in Dharma's mind.

'Bof has prophesized about this. Only you matched the description. We put you in a life-preserving incubator in slumber mode and transshipped to Earth. We have learnt much about Earth in the past period through our espial instruments. They got damaged in that environment, but we kept

sending new ones again. Nokoevid was interested to know more about the life form there. That's how we know about it.'

'But then, why now is Nokoevid not interested. Why he doesn't attack Earth and capture it. He is evil.' Dharma questioned.

'No, he never intended to capture Earth. See, Eritrea was out of personal revenge, but Nokoevid is a smart and visionary leader. He wants to expand Xorian Empire and make it prosperous. Therefore, he studied this parallel universe. But then the study revealed that Muversian life cannot survive there. In fact, that portal needs to be closed; otherwise, it would have consequences. Nokoevid doesn't know how to close this artificially created portal. We don't know what kind of consequences this open artificial portal would have. Therefore, Nokoevid did not use this weapon again, and even the experiment with IDL too ended.' Boro explained.

'But then why was I shoved there, and how come I survived on such a planet with such energies which are completely different from ours.' Dharma was perplexed.

'That is the most sought-after question. As you say in Earth, a million-dollar question.'

'You have done a good study of Earth.'

'Even today, we have signals from Earth. The vector given to your mom still is functioning, and we are getting the info about Earth. But I shall not tell you anything about Earth.'

'What? Prof. Boro, if you can at least tell me about my parents. How are they? Please.' Dharma pleaded.

'Just note that they are safe. But you cannot go back there yet.'

'I don't intend to also, Prof. Boro.'

'The energies in your universe are very different from ours. But we learnt one thing that somehow, humans can see those energies and visualize them. I am not sure, but this is Nokoevid's conclusion, but before I could have understood about the technicalities thereof, I was separated from him.'

'Means. You said he is evil. You yourself might have left him.' Dharma was more confused now.

'Yes, he is pure evil. But then he understood that I was with him just to learn about these complex phenomena which I was going to use against him. Therefore, he ordered me to arrest and prosecute me for sedition. I escaped somehow. I was on my mother planet Eritrea at that time. I had to run and hide in many places, and finally, I landed in Mazol. Here the in-bred were simple, and soon I could convince them I was their friend.

Given my superior technology, I could help them much. I made Mazol my base. We started an uprising in Eritrea. I managed to create an armed group, and there was a struggle in Eritrea. I met Laura at that time only, and she started working for me. Here the vector gave us the information that you have done great on Earth, and thus we called you here. Because those energies did not have a negative impact on you.'

'Because he indeed is the son of God. The Child of Two Worlds.' Tara intervened.

'Now, even I have to believe.' Boro telepathized.

'Come on. You all are really embarrassing me.' Dharma chuckled.

'Lighter moments to be cherished.' Boro telepathized in a waggish mood.

Janak 290 has taken greater speed and is now stabilized at 7000 times the speed of light. No one knew where the ship was headed; it, at times, seemed meaningless. Boro continued.

'Coming back, our only miscalculation was the time that you had spent on Earth should be equivalent to almost two Eritrean years or six Mex, but it ends up at one Tym period. This makes our belief in Bof even stronger. Bof suggested contacting you back after one Tym period. As per my calculation, it should be a hundred years passed on Earth, but to my surprise, only twenty-four years passed. This parallel universe transit had some element of surprise. We are still figuring out the math of it.'

'That's interesting. Seems Bof is an interesting book. But the miscalculation may not be of that bigger order. I was on Earth for more than twenty-four Earth years.'

'What? This is a surprise to us.' Boro was shocked.

'As I was told later, and now can join the dots, when Zoro gave me as a child to my mother, despite being out of the incubator, I was not growing. My growth seemed stilted. My human parents were in a dilemma as I was an alien; they didn't want this secret to be out. Nonetheless, they somehow contacted a monk in the Himalayas. This monk called Maha Yogi suggested I be with him. He was the one who took good care of me as a newborn. He realized that I have huge energy inside, and it will take time for me to grow. He used to call me the Chinese Bamboo tree. Maha-yogi brought me up in his place and, after a few years, handed me over to my parents. The twenty-four years I have spent with my parent doesn't mean I have spent only that much time on Earth. I don't know how much the exact time was, but it is definitely more than twenty-four years. Even later,

I used to visit this Maha-yogi and learnt to stabilize myself and channel my energy.'

'You are indeed the same person as Bof says. Bof says that the son of God would have huge energy inside him, and he will deliver us all from all evil.' Tara was surprised.

'Is it so? I guess I must read it early.' Dharma responded.

'When you read it, you will understand how wonderfully it has captured the scientific concepts.' Tara was so much into the eulogy of Bof.

'But still, how can I be of help Prof. Boro.' Dharma dodged the discussion on the religious book.

'See, you survived in that environment, which itself is tricky. Not only you survived, but you also thrived well. You adapted that environment so well that you were able to secure a place in the most coveted space expedition program.'

'That's true. But now I feel since I was a Muversian when I reached Earth, my body became sharper and more agile. What seemed difficult for a normal human was easy for me. I can understand complex concepts easily; I was physically stronger than most and was super agile.'

'You will have the same impact here. Because it seems you have absorbed that cosmic energy of both worlds. You are a child of two worlds.' Boro was ecstatic.

'Child of two worlds.' Dharma was not sure how to react. This was the second time these people had referred him like that.

'Therefore, now, with the help of this equipment, you have to do the math, decipher that omnipresent energy, and emancipate us all.' Boro was first time praising Dharma.

'Ok. Professor Boro. Show me and educate me with the technical details. Let me try to figure out the omnipresent cosmic energy.'

'Wonderful.'

Boro took Dharma into a small, dimly lit chamber. The Maen drive was activated. Thus, the normal gravity experienced by Dharma is due to the centrifugal force. Dharma could easily walk through the place where Boro was leading him to. A droid welcomed Dharma as soon they entered the chamber, and Dharma was made to sit on a tapestried chair, which was quite odd to be there in a space shuttle. However, it was just to distract and before Dharma could understand anything, a small bolt flying in the air converted itself into an open semi-circular helmet engulfing Dharma's head. Dharma felt as if he was going for a

computed tomographic scan. Soon he felt many rays filling his head. It was a different feeling. It seemed as if from one computer, data was getting transferred to another. Dharma was receiving knowledge about the Muverse, Xorian Empire, and Eritrea through this data transfer, including all the technical knowledge.

Dharma, for the first time, felt as if there was a barrage of rays attacking him, overwhelming him completely. Many visions come and go in a short time. Each neuron of the brain was getting energized, and Dharma had mixed feelings. On the one hand, he was getting acquainted with a complex world; on the other, he felt like many needles were poking at him.

The pain became unbearable every moment; it seemed his head would blast at any time. The energy that was getting absorbed by Dharma was depicted on a virtual screen before Boro.

'Shall I stop,' telepathized the Droid assistant.

'No, let the KT (knowledge transfer) continue.' Boro had a nasty facial demeanour.

The indicator showed Dharma had received most of the important technical information, geographical location, super-luminal travel-related information, administration and demographic information. The only crucial piece left was about Qued. Dharma needed to know about it.

The pain was now excruciating. It seemed this much data transfer, not even a sophisticated AGI could handle. Dharma, indeed, was special. He was not only smart but also strong-willed. He was still receiving the data.

'I shall stop it now. He will die if we don't.' The Droid assistant was panicking.

'Let the Qued-related information be transferred.' Boro was firm.

'He would die if we don't stop it just now.'

'No, continue.' Boro didn't care. He knew that if this person was really a son of God, he would withstand this pressure.

Dharma was now receiving information about the complex energies of Muverse. His brain cells were swelling because lots of energy was transferred in an extremely short time. The energy exchanged was so much that the screen started showing red, and the alarm rang.

Suddenly a laser blast shattered the headpiece, which was transferring the data. Dharma fainted and fell off the chair.

'What nonsense, Zoro?' Boro was frustrated. 'Who told you to interfere?'

'Sir, I had to. Because had I not stopped, the life of the son of God was in peril.'

'You will be punished for interfering in my decision. You don't have the authority Zoro. This is a punishable act.'

'I am ready for the punishment, sire. But we have a greater problem at hand.'

'What problem?

'Our supplies for Maen are unfortunately over. We cannot continue with HTM propellers.' Zoro said politely.

'What nonsense? I have kept stock enough to last for ten Tymlight (1000 light years) journey, and in ½ Kel (one Earth day), you are saying our stock is over.'

'Sorry, sir. It seems someone has given you forged material. It may be the work of those spies who were active in Mazol. We are now stuck in space. We cannot even reach any safe planet. There are none.'

'We have combed full Mazol and could not find a trace of them. They have left the planet.' One soldier from ground zero reported to the Commander, who was sitting in the battle starship.

'What our local spies are saying? Where have they headed to.' The Commander was not happy with the development.

'Sir, the spies are dead. Seems the traitors have killed the spies here.'

'The local natives; ask them. They are the supporters of these traitors. Catch the chieftains and find out where these traitors have left.'

'Sir, we have done that. The people here have no idea. We have laboured hard with them, but they have not given us any useful information. But there is one very strange behaviour we have seen.'

'Strange behaviour.'

'We were torturing these inbred, but they were happy and were saying that their God incarnate has come. He will kill us all for torturing these in-bred.'

'What nonsense? Do you believe in such superstition? Come, we need to find out about those traitors. We cannot go without the traitors back; Dias will kill us all.'

'But do you want one soldier to be here so that in case they return, he can handle them?'

'Good idea. Let one Nonpareil Soldier be there. Ask him to communicate with us on a real-time basis, and as soon he gets any information about the traitors, relay it to us.'

'But sir, where shall I ask him to station.'

'Do you really want such small instructions too? Can't you do anything on your own? Ask him to station in the country where the supporter of that God incarnate is the most. They will return to that place only.'

'Ok, Sir. Then Satrap is the kingdom where our Soldier will stay.'

'Just one thing, whether the in-bred have the capacity of overpowering him.'

'No, Commander. These lowly in-bred are no match to a Nonpareil Soldier. I don't think there is any weapon with these in-bred which can penetrate the armour of our Soldiers. '

'I know, and I don't doubt the capability of my people, but just for safety's sake, ask two Nonpareil Soldiers to station. One at Satrap and one at Ghoul. Because these are the two countries from where we received the trail of that traitor.'

'This is a very unfortunate day. Governor Kor has been assassinated. He was one of the ablest administrators the Xorian Empire had ever seen. We wish the departed soul all peace and pray that the family and all of us get the inner strength to bear this loss.' The announcement was happening during the last rite of Governor Kor getting conducted. The entire Xorian Empire witnessed the sad moment through the live telecast.

'We need to curb this menace soon.' Nokoevid was furious. He telepathized to Dias secretly. They all were sitting on a big stage, and the screen was showcasing the achievements and journey of Governor Kor. This was telecasted throughout Eritrea, and the newsfeed would eventually go to the full Xorian Empire spanning approximately 700,000 lightyears square. (seventy Tymlight square)

'Yes, sir.' Dias responded.

'Any news from Mazol'. Nokoevid enquired.

'No sir. Not yet. But don't worry. Soon that terrorist will be in our grasp.'

'Dias, tell me one thing. Who are these supporters? And how come they have managed such a big feat. Killing Governor Kor in my presence is an achievement. This means there is a big lapse in our security.'

'Sir, I agree. Post the first Eritrean War, and before we established our control over Eritrea, during this five Tym (500 Earth years), Eritrea was literally ruled by Lux Fulgor and Bof as faith became extremely popular.

Many Angelan, Acquian and Centaurs converted to Bof and started believing in this. Many others who didn't convert started supporting the cause. Because the terrorist Boro was brainwashing all. He is projecting you as evil and ensuring that Eritrea not only becomes independent, but the Xorian Empire also collapses. He has many supporters even in the inner circle of the Xorian Empire.'

'What? In the Inner circle are followers of Bof and supporters of Boro.' Nokoevid was shocked.

'Yes, sir. And now they all are very excited because they feel that the son of God is about to arrive. Bof says that it is time that he is about to appear.'

'What nonsense Dias? You believe in these fables. You are too old for these fairy tales. If there are such supporters or believers across our Empire, try to crush them. Educate them about scientific temperament and not to get influenced by terrorists like Boro who is using faith as a tool to misguide them.'

'That will be done, sir.' Dias responded.

'Now, you all be ready for the address of our Supreme Commander Nokoevid.' The announcement resonated with the whole of Eritrea.

'Friends!!! This is a sad day when some dunderhead terrorists have been successful in breaching our security cover and could cause such a fatal injury to the Eritrean cause. I know you might not have thought these terrorists would have the courage to do this dastardly act. But they have done it, and they have crossed the limit. Hitherto our policy was to neutralize these terrorists by ensuring that we can educate them about their true causes; our policy was of tolerance and to ensure that we can have a brighter tomorrow for all. But it seems these brutes understand only one language. This attack has made me left desolate and bereft and has breached my patience level. I, after a thoughtful decision, decided to bring a new law which shall be named as Kor Act. As per this Kor Act, all those who shall be believed to be a supporter of Believers of Bof shall be prosecuted for sedition and if found guilty shall be thrown to prison in planet X141.'

There was complete silence, and many shuddered after listening to this speech of Nokoevid. Eritreans always believed that Nokoevid was evil and his rule was not good for them. But somehow, they were managing under this tough rule. Many of the Angelan, Acquian and Centaur races in Eritrea in the past one Tym (100 Earth years) have adopted the faith of Bof, which earlier was followed only by Fleshy. Now the preaching

of Bof had become their way of life. With this new Kor Act, if you professed your faith openly, you were threatened with being thrown to the barren land of X141.

'I urge you all to have a scientific temperament and not believe in fables which are weaved by few to service their vested interest. For this purpose, I hereby make the cerebral transfer or otherwise publishing, professing or communicating anything which is not scientific or which gives rise to superstitions prohibitory and anyone, whether natural or artificial being shall be punished with the detainment of five Mex (twenty Earth years) and a fine of 100,000 Tyc for such violation. The person must service during this five Mex as a slave to Nonpareil Soldiery, and they shall be free to use the services of a detainee in any which manner they so deem fit.' Nokoevid continued.

The people of Eritrea, whether Acquian, Angelan, Fleshy or Centaur, all were in shock. Eritrea was now home to many Melange and Merkelite as well as many Namuhian, including Acrimean and Nadriman. After the first Eritrean war, when Kolark made this place hub for manufacturing Indpro, huge wealth was bestowed on this planet, and almost one Tym (100 Earth years) period was a golden period where all flourished. This was the time when the Mishian government gave the revenue rights of planet Eritrea to Mayo Corporation. Kolark was exploiting the 'black stone' and making finer Indpro. The City was directly investing money. Fleshy were the main race now, but Angelan, Centaurs, and Acquians too were happy. Kolark had come out as an able administrator. He shifted the headquarter of Mayo Corporation to Eritrea. Bof prophesized that after the alien attack, the *Land of Light would prosper*. Many Angelan and Centaurs converted to the faith of Bof. Almost all Acquian converted to Bof. Many Melange and Nadriman also followed Bof. Eritrea and Bof both were prospering. But then came the discovery of Quanion and, soon thereafter, *Arepo* waves and HTM propellers. Mayo Corporation was not that successful as Indpro were out of vogue. Then the darkest night loomed over Eritrea when Nokoevid came to power as Supreme Commander, and his revenge was writ large over Eritrea. Since then, Eritrea has been under a puppet controlled directly by Nokoevid, and recently Governor Kor was appointed by a rigged poll. Governor Kor was an Acrimean, and it was impossible for him to win the poll. He, as Governor, furthered the policy of Nokoevid.

'Lastly, though, our policy from the beginning has been to see Eritrea develop as an Autonomous Territory. Its great culture is preserved, and it

is prosperous within the Xorian protection. But, alas, it seems that Eritrea, like Nadus, cannot be allowed the status of Autonomous Territory, and thus I declare Eritrea to be a Xorian Administrative Territory for an indefinite time and appoint my trusted aide Dias as the Governor of Eritrea.'

The Eritreans were shocked. Even though many felt that Kor rigged the election but there were still elections, and it was quite possible next time, they could get a local representative as their Governor who shall give a responsible government. But now the status of Eritrea had shifted from Autonomous Territory to XAT, which meant it was now under direct subjugation of Nokoevid. They didn't know whether it was to punish the terrorist or it was to punish the Eritrean people or was this pre-determined.



Dharma's head was still spinning. He felt like a huge and heavy stone was on his head. He was feeling dizzy and trying to absorb the avalanche of information. Slowly he came to his senses, and droid brought him some type of drink.

'What is this?' Questioned Dharma.

'This is old fashioned drink. Mazolian Muksa drinks this to get over the hangover. It may help your cause too' Droid telepathized to Dharma.

'Thanks. I think I need such drinks only.' Dharma was sarcastic; the droid did not flinch a bit. He left the glass of liquid near Dharma and went back to do his business.

Dharma drank and finished it in a hurry.

'I guess I need to get out of this shuttle. I am feeling exhausted here. I need to float in the free space.' Dharma suggested.

'I can't help you with that. More so, Prof. Boro is busy finding out the solution to how to bring this shuttle to speed. Seems the Maen was adulterated; Janak 290 halted in just ½ Kel time. It is the work of the spies at Mazol.' Droid gave Dharma the news.

'Hmm. I will see if I can be of any help.' Dharma left the small chamber and proceeded towards the main station where Boro was expected.

'Only thing that can help is to have our independent Indpro and run away in separate directions.' Boro telepathized to Laura and Tara while Zoro was standing far away. Boro still was not happy with the way Zoro interfered when information was getting transferred to Dharma. Zoro's

interference meant the crucial piece of knowledge which Boro wanted to plant inside Dharma went begging.

'I have one more suggestion.' Dharma telepathized to all. Now he had mastered the art. The information exchange had made him aware of the technique of using mental waves for communication. This ends the barrier of language, and everyone can communicate in a single language to all.

'What is your suggestion?' Boro asked.

'We simply don't do anything. We get arrested. Let the Nonpareil Soldiers have us.'

'What nonsense?' Boro was flabbergasted at the suggestion of Dharma.

'If they arrest us, what will they do?' Dharma questioned. He continued, 'They will take all of us to Xor. It would be brilliant to be inside Xor.' Dharma was calm while putting across his point.

'How would it be of any help?' Boro was still contemptuous.

'Because when we are tried for sedition at Xor, we can use this trial to stoke the rebellion. You yourself said that many believers of Bof believe in the legend of the son of God. If the son of God asks them to help us, you see how much trouble it may create. This will create some problems for the Xorian Administration.'

'What if they kill us all here instead of arresting us?'

'Why will they do so? The soldiers will not kill us because killing you will make a bigger hero out of you. Nokoevid would like to punish you for your crime by proving that you are a traitor and that the cause of freeing Eritrea is a lost cause. He will not gain anything by killing you but would gain by trying you and bringing infamy upon you and your cause.'

'You make sense, Dharma.' Boro agreed to Dharma's view.

'Therefore, what we need to do is get arrested.'

'Ok, then, we have nothing but to wait for the soldiers to approach us.'

'Yes. But I will utilize this time to research some topics. I would need a free float in the cosmos to feel it before we all are captured in a prison cell.'

'It is alright. I have an armoured suit for you. You can have it and float here. We shall also halt but at some distance from you. We shall be connected through pure waves.'

'Ok.'

Soon Dharma was outside in the free cosmos, just floating as if swimming in space. He was flying here and there, feeling the cosmos. It seems this was his home, and he was meant to do this. He soon started

his experiments. He wanted to check about the omnipresent energy of the Quaintium. What kind of material was this? Soon he started understanding the various energy of the free-floating space. He wanted to check what Muversian space-time was. How was it different from the space-time of the cosmos where he grew up.

He gave a mental command to a nanoparticle on his suit, which then severed and took the shape of a complex cosmic sensory instrument, and it started measuring the space-time fabric and was giving the feed to Dharma directly. Dharma realized that Quanion atoms were there in abundance. With the help of this equipment in his suit, he could feel that the Quanion were getting created and the repulsion was taking place. He could measure the expanding Muverse.

'This is so exciting. I never realized that the space-time fabric itself has such interesting properties.' Dharma was feeling excited as a young child who became excessively happy to learn how to add or subtract some numbers.

Dharma started sending signals nearby and doing the math. He started making models to understand the speed of expansion of Muverse. Suddenly he found something strange.

'The rate of expansion is different.' Dharma was astonished. He started calculating again, but it was now evidently clear that the Muverse expansion speed where Dharma was and at a place around a Heaur (1.5 trillion Kilometers Earth standard) was significantly different.

'Is it because there is some black hole. Which is creating the space-time fabric to change. The huge mass which is distorting space-time.' Dharma thought. He decided to send his signals there to get a vision of the area. But to his surprise, his *Arepo* waves were getting distorted. There was a boomerang effect with the waves. It seemed the space-time of Muverse behaving erratically there. There was some distortion. It was surprising. Dharma decided to enquire about this anomaly. But the problem was that he could not cover this huge distance in this armoured suit.

While he was wondering about covering the distance and figuring out what was there which was causing the distortion in the acceleration of the expansion of Muverse, Dharma felt as if he was pulled inside by an extremely powerful force. He, with a great jerk, was pulled as if a fish was pulled by a fisherman out from the waters.

Dharma found that he was in a pool of huge radiating light. He is getting sucked into some kind of seven-dimensional demi-cube. He felt

as if he was getting shattered. All the body pieces were going to get away from him. He was being pulled in all directions. When he almost lost the battle, some kind of energy engulfed him; he was saved. His shape remained the same. The forces pulling him had disappeared.

The eye-dazzling illumination subsided slowly, and a figure started to assemble in front of Dharma. He concentrated hard and slowly saw the figure shaping up as an extremely beautiful girl in white attire. She was also floating in space like him in the same demi-cube. The mysterious lady was staring at Dharma.

'What are you doing here?' the mysterious lady who had just appeared from nowhere telepathized.

'I am trying to find out the reason for different space-time fabrics. But who are you?'

'You stupid lowly creature, you have bumped into my sluice gate. I was experimenting with the three-dimensional cosmic flow. The space-time fabric is impacted because my shuttle is far heavier than the cosmic grid. You cannot visualize it.'

'But who are you.'

'I don't have any name. You lowly creatures can never fathom us. But you can address me as Sona.'

'Sona. Pleasure bumping into you. My name is Dharma.'

'You didn't bump. You have sent *Arepo* waves that hit my research tools, and it sucked you in. Because I was experimenting with the three-dimensional cosmic flow, and my instrument found you a deviation, and thus, you got sucked into it. I had to save you, or else you would have lost your life.'

'You are saying I cannot fathom about you or your instruments. This made me curious.'

'Dharma. I am from Ether. You are one of few lesser dimensional creatures who is meeting an Ether. We generally don't mingle with you; you cannot fathom our world. Consider yourself highly fortunate to meet an Ether in person.' The God-like creature—the Ether, telepathized.

'That's interesting. Thanks for obliging and meeting a lowly creature like me.'

'You may say so. Though there were two reasons for this happenstance. One, you exuberate a different energy that makes you get sucked in. Otherwise, my instruments are highly sophisticated to not commit such a mistake. Secondly, my equipment shows you have a different radiance,

so I have to study you. Thus, we met. I would like to know everything about you.'

'There is nothing to know about me. I am a lowly creature.' Dharma telepathized. He was modest and calm. He was still floating the seven-dimensional demi-cube.

But before Dharma could understand anything, Sona gave a mental command, and they disappeared from the demi-cube.

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## CHAPTER 19

# Meeting the Mother God

'The pure wave is cut. Where is Dharma?' Boro was shocked.

'I don't know, sir.' Zoro was also alarmed.

Boro commanded Janak290, which was now out of Maen cover and was cruising due to momentum that left post the huge emergency deceleration. It decelerated from a super-luminal speed to one-hundredth of light speed. They were soon spotted by the Nonpareil Soldier's starship.

'Sir, Fleet 23 has sent a signal to surrender.' Zoro shouted and panicked.

'We are spotted, Zoro. Respond back and surrender.' Boro commanded.

'What about Dharma then?' Tara was confused.

'We can't help it, Tara, now? I don't know where he is.'

The Janak 290 gave the signal of surrender, but still, due to some confusion, a mild laser beam was shot from the 23rd Fleet, and it hit Janak 290. The automatic defence shield activated, and Janak 290 started running away at full throttle. Though given it was extremely low speed, it could not go anywhere.

The 23rd Fleet of Nonpareil Soldiery now had received the surrender message, but the action of Janak 290 running away created confusion in their mind.

'Captain, the traitor has messaged to surrender, but their starship is running away at full throttle.' The assistant gave the news to the captain of the 23rd Fleet.

'Boro is a serious threat. He is a cunning person. We cannot trust him one bit. Fire the mega blaster. This will destroy the propeller.

Soon Janak 290 was hit with a huge laser blast causing huge damage to the shuttle.

'We have our beaming transponder. Our best chance is to beam ourselves to a nearby celestial body.' Boro told his team. They all realized it

was a matter of a moment before the Nonpareil Soldiers were there. They initially thought of surrendering, but the mega blast indicated that the soldiers were instructed not to arrest. To kill.

'But Prof. Boro, we have limited tablets. On the planet, we shall die in no time. How will we get out of that lost world?' Laura opposed the idea.

'Then do you have a better idea.'

'We decided to get arrested. Let's stick to the plan.' Laura was still insisting on the same plan.

'Are you out of your mind, Laura? Do you really believe that these soldiers will arrest us? They are going to kill us all here.'

'No, Prof. Boro, I don't believe so.'

'Stupid you all. There is no time for such stupidity.'

'All, please note that Nonpareil Soldiers are going to fire the high-precision gamma blasters.' Janak 290 announced. 'I cannot dodge it, but our shields are on, and we can withstand this attack. But the next attack will destroy the shield and can damage us fatally. I have calculated even at the max speed, I cannot dodge the attack.'

'We have no option left. Where is the Indpro?' Boro barked.

Soon the Nonpareil Soldier saw one Indpro coming out of the Star ship Janak 290. The Nonpareil Soldiery shot a high precision blast which hit the Indpro, damaging it. The Indpro had no option but to return back to Janak290. There was another blast, and Janak290 lost its propellers and couldn't move further. It was in a state of free float in space.

Armoured Nonpareil Soldiers shot off from their starship and flew towards Janak 290. These soldiers were draped in space-ready armoured suits that allowed them to fly freely in space. Also, a few smaller space crafts could be seen moving towards Janak 290. In no time, Janak 290 was filled with Nonpareil Soldiers.

'Prof. Boro, this is Captain of the 23rd Fleet of the Xorian Nonpareil Soldiery. Rest assured that we are not here to cause you physical harm if you abide by our orders. We are here to arrest and take you to Xor for a fair trial. Don't commit further idiocy and come out of your hiding.' The Captain telepathized as strongly as he could, in all directions, knowing that Boro and his friends would receive the message. They must be hiding somewhere in the long starship. Though Janak 290 was destroyed badly, it was floating freely. The soldiers thus had to use the artificial magnetic strip of their boots to walk across the ship.

'This is Laura; I surrender.' Laura was the first to come out of her hiding.

She was respectfully taken into custody. Then slowly, all came out and at last, Boro too.

'Welcome, Prof. Boro; I heard a lot about you. You and your friends all are under arrest for a felony of the highest order–sedition, treachery and mass scale uprising leading to loss of IP-2 lives.'

The Captain gave a mental command, and pica bots slowly converted themselves into handcuffs, and all Boro, Laura, Tara and Zoro were covered in the cuffs. Other droids, AGIs etc., were also taken into custody.

'Where am I?' Dharma found himself in a jungle near a pond of water. Sona could be seen eating a delicious fruit local to that strange planet. She looked like a princess, but Dharma knew it was an illusion.

'You are on a planet. This suits you, don't worry. You don't need the armour, so I have removed it. I have calculated your body is suitable for the environment here. Enjoy the surroundings. You would love it; this is what your subconscious study tells me.' Sona telepathized.

'You have studied my likes and dislikes.' Dharma was mesmerized.

'Kind of. You lowly being can only talk through mental waves; we can do much more. I am in a three-dimensional form. Otherwise, you cannot even fathom how I look. For you, it is impossible to visualize.'

'I don't even want to at this stage, though I get the basic idea.'

'You have an idea. I would love to know.' Sona, the seven-dimensional Ether, was curious to know. Though she had the ability to suck the information from Dharma, she was still in a playful mood. She wanted to hear it out.

'I will say, let's visualize there are multiple sheets of fabric laid one over other. Each sheet is a universe. These worlds have some common laws and some unique properties. I had travelled from one sheet to another. It is like the ant was walking on one sheet, and suddenly she has fallen to the next adjacent sheet.' Dharma tried to explain.

'Wonderful. You have got the drift. Just to add a little more explanation, each sheet is not only a three-dimensional world but a multi-dimensional world. It is possible that one sheet is eleven-dimensional and the other is twenty-six-dimensional and likewise. As you rightly said, the properties may be common or unique. I am a seven-dimensional creature in Muverse.

But I may not go into the Universe. That is from where you have come. Because that travel for me is not possible.'

'Why can you not travel? There is some portal created near the Eritrean stellar system.' Dharma questioned.

'This is where you are missing the trick. It is like each sheet is made of a different fabric. They all have started with singularity, but the space-time fabric is different. It is like the ant now falls on the sheet made up of water. Now she will find it hard to swim; it was easy for it to crawl. And if she falls again to another sheet made up of fire, she will die immediately. So these sheets are not made up of the same material.'

'Understood. That's why when Nokoevid or Boro went to the parallel universe, they could not survive for long.'

'It may be true or may not be. That I leave it to your wisdom.' Sona avoided those pointed questions.

'But why have you got me here.' Dharma asked finally. He was confused about what such a superior being, just God like needed from him. He was a poor human. Or whatever his race was.

'Because I wanted to study you. You were exuberating a different radiance than others. I wanted to research this life. We research different topics, and I am interested in the fauna and flora of lowly life cycles.'

'Hmm. I can understand. For you, I am like what an ant is to me.'

'Do you study ants?'

'I don't, but yes, there are people on Earth who study lowly life. Likewise, I am a small creature for you, and you are interested in knowing about me.'

'But I am not interested in you because you are a small creature but because you are an interesting one. See, to impress you, I have taken the form that will please you most.'

'Hmm. But you can read my subconscious and conscious mind and know everything about me.'

'I have already done that. I know everything about you. Now I want to feel you. I want to see what it is like to be someone who has absorbed the energies of two different worlds. This is unique. Even for us, we have not thought of going to a different world and surviving there.'

'But you are in a different world. You are a seven-dimensional being who, at present, is in a three-dimensional shape.'

'Yes. But I cannot fathom how I can go from this structural Muverse to another Muverse and survive there. You have learnt that this Muverse is governed by certain energies. The Quaintium. They are the ones responsible

for this Muverse to be in its current shape. They will one day collapse back into a singularity.'

'Yes, I have recently learnt that.'

'Now, guess what would happen to us. The Ether.'

'You will also collapse.'

'Correct. So we will also end with this. But we cannot fathom going to a different Muverse and surviving there. You are unique. No doubt you are called the son of God.'

'Don't get confused. The lowly people have prepared a book to confuse and rule over other lowly people, and they named this book Bof.' Dharma didn't want to get connected to this book.

'You may be correct. This book Bof might have been an instrument of oppression. Few might be misusing it so as to mislead others for their own agenda. But how come whatever is written in Bof is coming true.'

'Because it was not written earlier. Only those events which transpire are written. Otherwise, they simply equate by giving a very wide interpretation to it.' Dharma countered.

'Hmm. I get you don't believe in Bof.' Sona was persistent.

'Do you?' Dharma was expecting a no for an answer. A superior god-like creature cannot believe in something as stupid as Bof.

'What if I say yes?' Sona replied.

'What? Don't kid me.'

'I am not kidding. Bof may be misused, but it was dictated by an Ether who had a unique capability of vision. He dictated it to an Angelan in Eritrea. Like you are meeting me, you cannot doubt what I say. Likewise, the Angelan believed in the words of a superior being.

Dharma looked perplexed at the revelation. Sona continued, 'You first believe in it and try to behave like a son of God. You may be a lowly human, or you may so believe, but for others, you are the son of God. There are many in Xorian Empire who believe in you. So you go behave like a son of God. Don't fear anyone.'

'But why are you giving me this confidence.'

'I don't know. Something just tells me to impel you.'

'Thanks. Though I don't believe that I am the son of God, yes, if people believe and they are in pain, then I should definitely help them.'

'You are the one who should help these people and establish the rule of law, like your name Dharma. Your parents on Earth believed that you

represent righteousness and you will establish the rule of law wherever you go. You have to justify that.'

'Thanks, Sona. I don't know why we met. But meeting you made me feel so elated that I can't express it. When I was with Prof. Boro and the team, I felt some kind of suspicion; I don't know why, but with you, it seems that you are a pure heart. What you are telling is not due to any vested interest.'

'I can't have any vested interest. I don't belong to your tribe. I am from a very different world. But I also feel some connection with you. I will give you a device. We can always be connected with that. You can communicate with me from wherever you are.'

'But the *Arepo* waves may be super-fast, but given the galaxy is so big, they will also take huge time for communication.'

'Who says we will use *Arepo* waves. I will give you a resonator. Whatever you will say, it will resonate all over Fran, and I will know. I can give you a resonator for the Muverse, too, but that is not relevant as I shall be in that place in my dimension, which is Fran galaxy for you.'

Dharma was shocked. A resonator which would resonate with the entire galaxy. What a phenomenon?

'Don't go into technicality. But to alleviate your confusion, the resonation will happen throughout Fran, but only I can listen to it. Likewise, my response only you will receive.'

'But why this pain.'

'I don't know, you are my favourite ant, it seems. So in the ant fight, I will not harm other ants but strategically guide you. If you are the son of God, then your mother should help you at all times. Otherwise, people will lose faith in you.'

'Haha. Thanks, Mother, then. I am much obliged.'

'I can do you one more favour. I realize you are longing to know about the Second Eritrean War. I can take you back in time and show you what transpired in Second Eritrean War.'

'Really!' Dharma was excited.

'Yes. And it will be completely different from how Tara told you. I am not going to tell you the story, but I will take you in that time to witness the unfolding of events. And to run it fast, I shall at times forward you to the relevant time.'

'I got it. I am going to see the movie. But you will fast-forward it whenever you feel it is not relevant. Back on Earth, when we watched

some cricket matches, we used to forward it to see the last overs. I am super excited.'

Yes, you got it right.'

'And few disclaimers.'

'What? You are like the lawyers back on Earth who shall not give a straight opinion.'

'Haha. I am not that bad. The disclaimer is I shall not be answering any questions. Second, you don't ask me to rewind, and lastly, I shall not take you to the time when you were thrown to the parallel universe.'

'But why can you not show me my journey to a parallel universe. Prof. Boro says I am connected to Nokoevid because of this only.'

'Because I told you, my limitation is within the four corners of this Muverse, I am confined to this space-time, to this grid, you and you alone had the capability of crossing it. I cannot find out as to what transpired beyond that artificially created wormhole.'

'Oh, so even Gods have limitations.'

'Well, to give you the same example that Tara gave you, for an ant, a human is god-like, but humans have many limitations. For you, I am God-like, but I have my own limitations, and they are very many.'

'Understood. Take me through to the journey of the Second Eritrean War.'

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## CHAPTER 20

# Second Eritrean War

'Sir, we have got them. They are four in number, traitor Boro, his supporter Zoro, Tara and Laura. We have caged them as they are dangerous. They all are stunned and thus sub-conscious. We have searched and taken away all weaponry on their person. Their starship got damaged. Thus, it is left in space. We are bringing them to Eritrea.' Captain of the 23rd Fleet reported to Dias. He was sitting in the chamber of his HTM ship, which was like Janak 290 in make and design.

'That is wonderful news, Captain. You shall be rewarded heavily.' Dias responded. He was ecstatic. The environment in Eritrea was gloomy post the assassination of Governor Kor. This news would give some respite.

The *Arepo* wave communicator ensured the communication between the two, however, with a certain lag of two Pal (ten Earth minutes). Therefore, both the captain and Dias would experience long pauses. However, they were used to it.

'Thanks, sir. But our screening has revealed they had one more IP-2 supporter.' Captain reported over the electronic communication.

'Oh. How come that evil supporter run away? It is impossible to get away from the clutches of Nonpareil Soldiery.'

'True, sir. They had connected with this person through pure waves. But the connection was lost. We tried our level best but couldn't find where this person was.'

'Ok. Leave that supporter. When this Boro shall be tried before the Xorian courts, everyone will come to know about his ill deeds. Bring him fast to Eritrea.'

'What are our commands for Mazol?'

'What about it? We are not interested in those dunderheads. Let me ask Supreme Commander Nokoevid. But till then, you ask your soldiers to

be stationed at Mazol only. If there are other supporters of Boro who had been brainwashed, they shall take care of them.'

'There is one peculiar thing we want to report to you.'

'What is it?'

'It seems that the Mazolian are very upbeat about the son of God. They are saying the son of God has arrived, and they have seen it. You know about the legend of the son of God.'

'Oh, you stupid being. This legend is created by Boro. He has used this faith Bof against Xorian Empire. He has made people believe that this faith is the ultimate faith. It has no scientific basis. It is mere rhetoric. But to strengthen his base and ensure that many people follow it, he has created the illusion that the son of God is going to come and deliver them from misery. These are loose talks and fables. Don't get guided by it.'

'Sir, in Mazol, the dunderhead walking snake-types believe it to be true. They think god incarnate has come. And this person mysteriously disappeared. He was connected through pure waves.'

'Cut it. I am not interested in this topic. Reach Eritrea soonest.'

Dias cut the communication. He was a cyborg. He never believed in such stories. But now he was hearing it for the second time. A mysterious person who vanished in the cosmos.

*It was impossible to be out of reach of the powerful screening system of Nonpareil Soldiery. There was no planet, no moon, nothing nearby. This person couldn't survive in that deep expanse of death. He was not in any space shuttle. Who is this person? Is the legend of the son of God true? Is there someone who is going to challenge the empire of Nokoevid? Shall he go to the planet Unique? The Garliquian are believed to see the future and also are the expert in black magic.*

Soon Dias realized what nonsense he was thinking. Black magic, ghost, and life beyond this realm was all figment of the imagination, and this legend of the son of God was also created by Boro to influence the gullible.

Dias was in two minds. Shall he discuss this with Nokoevid? Nokoevid got furious and was against such an unscientific temperament. Dias could risk a transfer to some barren planet if Nokoevid found him broaching such idiotic topics.

'Are you ready, Dharma?' Sona asked in jest.

'Yes, Mother God.'

'Then embrace yourself and be ready for the journey. We are going one Tym back. This was the time when Ralf had become history. He was impeached and was prosecuted for his crimes, including the assassination of Parinjay's Governor, sending a mission to Eritrea, causing huge financial loss without permission, giving weaponry to FREE-ME terrorists, abetting an attack on mother planet Xor and each such offence was independently enough to entitle a death sentence committing all of them certainly meant death was *fait accompli*. But still, when the judge asked Ralf what he had to say in his defence, Ralf responded that 'only crime I committed was losing Eritrea.'

'That is an interesting statement.'

'Yes, Dharma. To date, this statement of Ralf vibrates in the mind of Nokoevid. Many believe that it is the reason Nokoevid captured Eritrea.'

'But that is for personal revenge. The leader should be above and beyond such individualistic feeling.'

'You are right, Dharma. So we are going to the period when Ralf is dead; Nokoevid, who was working on this mysterious energy, left his job as a Chief scientist and came to Ivish. He joined politics and soon became the Governor of Ivish. In no time, Nokoevid became the Supreme Commander of the Xorian Empire. He was a charismatic leader. It was in his time the Quanion was discovered, Thyzer gave the technique of *Arepo* waves, but Nokoevid wanted to capture Eritrea. The attack was planned, and Nokoevid is now with his war council.'

'I am very excited to see all this. Will I be seeing them live?'

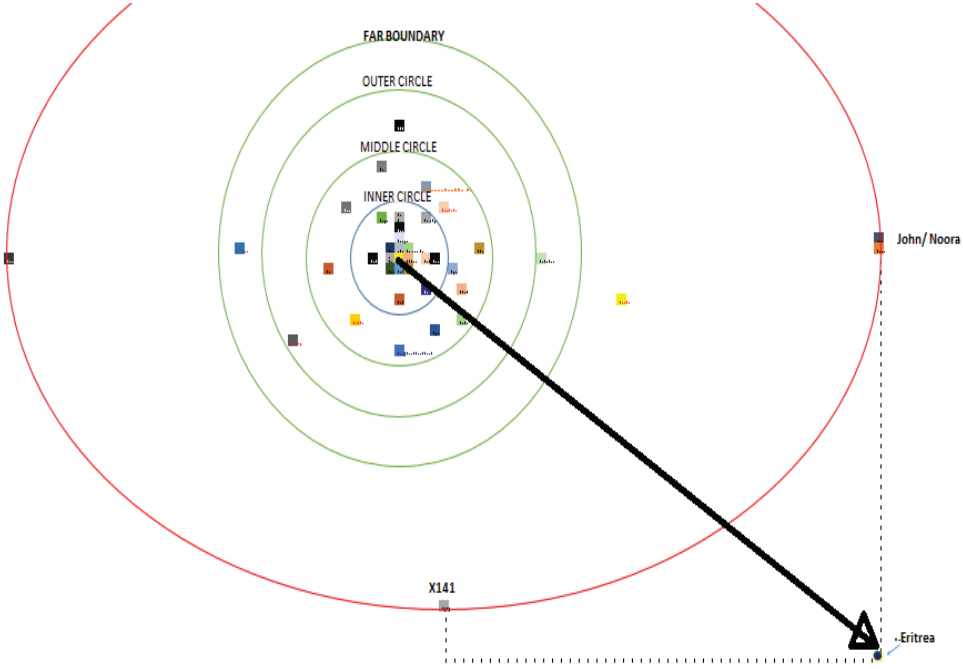
'Yes, Dharma. It is just like a telecast of a movie. We are going back in time. You can see them as if they are in front of you.'

Sona took Dharma in a small cube. Both fit inside this translucent cube and before Dharma could understand, there was too much light everywhere. Nothing was visible. Excess of light causes darkness, and Dharma now couldn't see anything. Soon, things improved, and Dharma found himself in a strange meeting room. Sona was with him in the cube.

The meeting room was huge, and it hosted almost all-important persons who needed to be there. This was Nokoevid's war council. Nokoevid was receiving the vision, and so were all others present there. Dharma would see what they all were visualizing on a fake screen.

Joko, his Military Chief, was explaining the strategy.

'We have built the Quanion super space way almost till Eritrea. Our Nonpareil Soldiery Fleet 24 and 25 shall march from Xor in a Kel's (two Earth days) time and reach Eritrea in three Kels (six Earth days).'




'You all can see the visuals. Our two fleets will approach Eritrea. But our fleets at X141 and John, as well as Noora, will be ready to be mobilized at any moment.' Joko continued.

'Why we need two fleets. Ain't one fleet enough,' inquired Nadriman Semit, who was in charge of supplies.

'Yes, Semit. One fleet is enough. But we are committing two Fleet so that in the unlikely event of any threat from Merkel or Shai, we can manage it. This is the direction of Supreme Commander.' Joko responded.

'I don't want to repeat the mistake of the first Eritrean War. We never believed that a Merkelite could undo our cause. That's what happened. Now Eritrea is under the control of a Mishian. We cannot take a chance.' Nokoevid ended this debate.

'Our first fleet will leave in 1 Kel's time, i.e. Tymex Date $^{332|12|2}$/13'1 3'8|12|14|16:19:7:0[9] and reach Eritrea by $^{332|12|2}$/13'13'8|12|16|5:7:8:9, and after that, another Fleet will start. The first fleet will not wait for the replenishment and immediately capture Eritrea. We will not give them any chance of surrender. We will simply land our Nonpareil Soldiers and take

[9] Refer Glossary for Tymex Date

over everything, including the prime country on land Lux Fulgor and the Acquian behemoth Lenogue in Deep Ocean.'

'But Joko, what we know about Eritrea is that it has many different races and countries.' Semit interfered again.

'No Semit. You have old information. After the first Eritrean War, Mayo Corporation and Kolark ruled the planet Eritrea. They had established their base at Lux Fulgor, and slowly it became central to the planet. The Indpro would be manufactured from all over the planet and will be sold from Lux Fulgor. This way, Lux Fulgor became a flourishing trading province. Now even when the Indpro is not that much in demand, still, because of its old glory Lux Fulgor is doing absolutely great. We will capture that first. Then slowly, other cities on land. We shall also almost immediately capture Lenogue at the Deep Ocean. That is another base for the manufacture of Indpro.'

'Ok. Understood.'

'Though now the trade is not that well, Eritrea still has a unique civilization, Acquian, and they are giving their services across Xorian Empire. All leading oceanographer comes from the Acquian race.'

'But Joko, how do you know they don't have weapons to fight our soldiers.' Semit was circumspect.

'Rest assured, Semit, the history will not be repeated this time. We have learnt our lessons and now have a huge technological advantage by constructing the Quanion way. Mayo Corporation has approached Tymex against our construction, but it was opined by the body that it is in our right to construct the Quanion way anywhere. Even the Mayo Corporation's Anion ship also ply on these Quanion expressways. So they cannot even object.'

'But are we giving them some kind of pre-warning?' Asked the political consultant who was here to see the impact of the war on politics and to ensure that Nokoevid's image was not tarnished in the process.

'No. We are not warning them. Eritrea belongs to Xorian Empire. Our forces were there in Eritrea, and they were made to retreat by Mayo Corporation. Mayo Corporation is a trespasser.' Joko was saying all the right statements, which would make Nokoevid happy.

'But this will have a negative impact. The Mishian will not take it easy.' The political consultant warned.

'I don't care.' Nokoevid roared literally. 'I am now going to take these Merkels head on. If they object to our Eritrean control, I will ensure they

are thrown out of Shai. The Mishian will pay the price of any interference in my command. Eritrea is to be subjugated.'

Nokoevid's statements were the last word. No one was now going to discuss anything on these lines. They all knew that Nokoevid still remembered the statement of his father, 'My only crime is I lost Eritrea.' They all knew that Nokoevid wanted this planet badly. The sycophancy and fear were so prevalent that none had the courage to counter Nokoevid. No one in the Empire had the audacity to state that it was wrong to usurp a living planet. Eritrea was a thriving business hub of Mayo Corporation and all the races there were now living prosperously.

'Post capture, what are the plans, Joko.' The political consultant got the drift and thus changed the topic.

'Once we capture the planet Eritrea, we shall immediately take control of the space by deploying forces there so that there can be no possibility of any attack from outside on the planet. Then our local Nonpareil Soldiers will ensure that the local rebellion is crushed and the country Lux Fulgor and Lenogue, the ocean country, are within our complete control. Then we establish planet Eritrea as a XAT.'

'No.' Nokoevid cut short Joko.

'My Lord, did I miss something.' Joko was trembling with fear. Nokoevid had such an impact on his subordinates that they didn't want to make him angry. His ire was disastrous in all senses.

'Yes, Joko. Once the Nonpareil Soldiers have control over the Eritrean countries, we shall not declare as XAT but as an Autonomous Territory.'

'But sir, Eritrea cannot be an Autonomous Territory. You cannot simply win the planet by force and give the in-bred the right to elect their government. It is counterintuitive.' One of the planners, who was an expert in *Arepo* wave communication, suggested.

'I know all these. But Eritrea will be declared an Autonomous Territory. I want them to elect a Governor amongst themselves. This will ensure that they will have an in-fight. They will not understand whom to elect as Governor. This will never allow them to rebel because they will never be together.' Nokoevid was as shrewd as he was intelligent. He could think ahead of time.

'You are very correct, my lord. But what if they elected someone who is against our cause.' The political consultant raised his doubt.

'We will see then. Because a divided Eritrea as Autonomous Territory is far better than having a rebellious Eritrea under our direct command.'

'Understood, sir.'

'Ask the forces to be ready. What kind of finances do we need?' Nokoevid asked.

'Sir, everything is under control. We have budgeted for it. The Governing Council will be apprised about the mission.' The Financial Controller suggested.

'But I don't need any approval of Governing Council. I am doing this as my administrative decision.' Nokoevid suggested.

'But sir, as per the rules of procedure, this mission cannot be undertaken by the Supreme Commander without Governing Council's okay.' The political consultant said with full caution. Everyone was aware that Eritrea was extremely sensitive to Nokoevid. All his advisors were aware that they couldn't invite the wrath of Nokoevid by being a naysayer.

'Find the loophole then. I thought this would have been done till now.' Nokoevid was evidently angry.

'Sir, it is done. But we don't know until it is tested in the highest courts. I have the opinion of the best legal practitioners, including Mishian law practitioners. There is a provision that if any territory is an imminent threat to Xorian Empire, then Supreme Commander has the discretion to use the force.' The legal advisor countered.

'But Eritrea is no threat to Xorian Empire', the political consultant said unexpectedly.

'That's correct. But the Mayo Corporation has usurped the Nonpareil Soldier a long time back and has not paid any reparation thereof. We have already given notices claiming a huge sum of money which we always knew they would not pay. So now we have a dispute with them.' Legal Advisor responded.

'Then we should sue them in Tymex.' The political consultant was adamant. Nokoevid didn't like naysayers, but he always believed in a pressure-free discussion. This helps plug all loopholes. He kept his critics and cynics near. He was a different leader, someone who had a huge belief in his own capabilities.

'Tymex is for differences amongst Merkel, Xor and Thyzer only, not for intra-Xorian issues. Technically Eritrea was captured by Nonpareil Soldiers, and Mayo Corporation has usurped it from us. Thus we have taken it as a Xorian territory which we have allowed Mayo Corporation to exploit. If you see the old records from the Governing Council meetings which proposed the impeachment of Supreme Commander Ralf, it is absolutely

clear that Eritrea is allowed to be exploited by Mayo Corporation for the time being until the next Supreme Commander takes a decision in this regard. Since then, no decision has been taken for Eritrea, and now only our Supreme Commander Nokoevid has decided that it is a Xorian territory and Mayo has to pay for using the services of Nonpareil Soldiers. Mayo and Eritrea have not paid the sum, and thus we are using the required force to recover the money.' The legal advisor put across all the legal points. But he forgot that he had inadvertently given huge pain to the supreme commander Nokoevid shoving him into deep thought.

'My only crime is losing Eritrea; otherwise, today, Xor would have produced better Indpros and captured even Shai. You stupid people are killing your own benefactor. The Omnipotent Creator help Xor. …'

Ralf was telepathizing all while he was about to be executed in a PLD device—a painless death device. It was telecasted everywhere as this was a huge scoop for the scribes across. Even this was major news in Merkel's realm.

'Sir, are you ok?' Telepathized one of the members of the war council.

Nokoevid was brought back. His father's assassination always haunted him.

'No more discussion. Ask the 24th and 25th Fleet to be ready to march.' Nokoevid ordered.

Finally, the decision was taken. Almost all the meetings headed by Nokoevid ended like this. He dictated his order. Simply listened to all but did what he had to do.

'It is bad news.' Hora rushed into the secured cabin of the Chief Executive of Mayo Corporation, Hick Nomar, who was a Melange.

'What is it, Hora? I am fed up with your olfactory senses.' Hick literally was annoyed by this Hum, who it seems always brought bad news. But he was best in business. Most loyal and committed. Mayo Corporation, of late, was facing a lot of attrition. As the profitable business of Indpro propelled, ships were now out of vogue. The business of delivering code to traverse wormholes was no more monopoly of Mayo Corporation. Nokoevid had ensured that this technology was no more with a select few, and he had developed an open-source platform which many companies now have utilized to develop such codes. Nokoevid's government itself had

a department which is making sophisticated codes to traverse wormholes. Nokoevid was experimenting with Quaintium energies, and though he till now had no success as an offshoot developed a lot of learning on these codes to traverse naturally created wormholes. Nokoevid had ensured that Mayo Corporation, who was responsible for his father's death, got wiped out from this galaxy.

'But sir, I can't help but bother you. The news is confirmed. Nonpareil Soldier is on its way to take over Eritrea.'

'What? But how can they? This is not legally tenable. We should immediately call the Shai government for help.'

'I have already done that. The Shai government says that Eritrea is an independent territory. It is not in their suzerainty. We don't pay them any tax. So we are not technically their citizenry.'

'What nonsense Hora. Mayo Corporation got the right to mine the 'Industrium' from the Shai government.'

'But sir, that was many Tym back. Legally even that fiat is expired.'

'Do we have any forces?' Hick had reached a level where fear became violent. 'Relay messages throughout Eritrea that I am going to address them. And arrange my meeting with Jasop.'

Soon the news was widespread across Eritrea that Xorian Forces would come in just four Eritrean days and take them over.

Eritrea was now more complex than ever. Lux Fulgor was the most flourishing and prosperous area where the headquarter of Mayo Corporation was situated. Angelan Heptad could not recover from the trouncing of the first Eritrean war. All the sites across the Deep Ocean and land where the black stone could be mined were part of Lux Fulgor territory. Fleshy now were the dominant race occupying all the important positions. Bof was the faith people had to follow to get any relief from the government. Many Angelan, Acquian, and Centaurs have adopted Bof. Greenland was declared as the territory of Lux Fulgor. The heretics and Liberals were extinct. Yakuts were now part of the territory covered under Lux Fulgor, and they were flourishing as Mayo Corporation promoted business and trade. All Acquian nations were now part of Lenogue, and the ultimate political commander of the entire Eritrean planet was a Fleshy named Jasop. People believed he was a descendant of Captain Josh.

The Fleshy were the first-grade citizens and the ones who were at all important places. Angelan were reduced to second-grade jobs, and Centaur was on the verge of extinction. Acquian, as a race, too, were not happy with

their lives. Thus many felt that now Eritrea was not the planet of the past, but it was a planet for Fleshy and the alien Melange, who were similar in appearance to Fleshy.

A certain part of Eritrea was happy that Nokoevid was planning to attack this so-called Land of Light.

'I don't understand. In the past period, Eritrea is completely changed. Fleshy, who were the second-grade citizens, now rule. How this change happened. How come the Angelans, who were so powerful, are grounded to dust.' Dharma was curious, and he spoke. Though he was still sitting in a cube and seeing the event unfold in front of him as he was watching all of them live.

'You are not supposed to ask questions, Dharma. I aint Tara.' a cold response came. Sona was not interested in answering the query.

'But then it would be difficult to understand this story. I insist that if you are helping me so much and wasting such precious time of yours on me, please help me grasp it completely.' Dharma pleaded.

'I don't understand though why I am doing this. But I will explain.'

'I am obliged, my mother God.'

'Flattery doesn't work with me. Let me warn.'

'I aint doing any.'

'Once the first Eritrean war was over, Kolark, the one-handed Merkel, captured Eritrea. The Angelan Haptad was almost destroyed, but Kolark's priority was to manufacture Indpro. Lux Fulgor was central to all sites full of 'Industrium', so Lux Fulgor became the hub. Slowly Fleshy became the trusted aide as they hardly had any religious feelings with black stone. Others couldn't withstand that the material they used to make idols of their God was crushed, trampled over and used as a mere stone.' Sona telepathized.

'Oh. I could understand. Fleshy would help Kolark more freely.'

'Yes. Though many Merkels and Melange who came from Shai to Eritrea liked Fleshy as they had a scientific temper and were extremely good pilots. Soon Mayo Corporation surpassed Felanie's, Indpro Corp. The Mayo's Indpro was made up of high-quality Industrium or Antium, thus could achieve 150C to 200 C speed.'

'1.5 to two Tymlight speed.'

'Yes, Dharma.'

'I guess then Mayo would have become prosperous and Fleshy too.'

'Mayo started selling these Mayo ships at a much lower price as it was manufacturing at a mass scale. Mayo monopolized both the important space expedition business, one is code for traversable wormholes, and another is super-luminal travel. Mayo soon became richer than even Xorian Empire. Eritrea was flourishing like anything. This was when Fleshy imposed Bof on all, and given that Fleshy had money, Bof spread like wildfire. Soon except for the inner circle, even the Xorian middle and outer circle celestial bodies were having many Bof followers.'

'Oh. That's interesting. So Bof is so popular.'

'And so is the belief that the son of God is for real. And he is going to come anytime soon. Your legend is powerful.' Sona grinned.

The power of legend. Dharma, who had just arrived in this new world, already had a superpower—the power of belief. The vast followers believed that a messiah would come. Maybe this was the power that would help him in taking over the mighty Nokoevid.

Sona fast-forwarded, and while Dharma was still in his thoughts, the story went ahead by four Eritrean days.

'Sir, our forces are defeated. The commander of Nonpareil Soldier 24 Fleet is now coming to meet you and Lord Jasop.' Hora was sad when he delivered the news to Hick Nomar.

'It is alright. Where am I summoned?'

'Nowhere, sir. The commander is coming to meet you here.'

'What? I am confused.'

'So am I. The forces have not caused any destruction except for those soldiers who went to fight them. There is no killing.'

'Hmm.'

Hick Nomar was confused. Xorian last time had devastated Eritrea. But this time, it seems there was a complete change in approach.

'Sir, the Commander is here.'

'Hello, Hick Nomar. How you doing?'

The commander was not a natural being but an artificially intelligent droid in humanoid form. He looked exactly like a replica of Ralf. It was Nokoevid's creation, and many felt that this was a masterpiece invention

of Nokoevid as the commander would state nothing but whatever the thoughts of Nokoevid. Nokoevid had transferred his memory, emotions and cerebral thinking to this droid. This commander thus was more highly respected in Nonpareil Soldiery than even the natural commanders. The super-intelligent droid was named R7. R for Ralf, and seven was Nokoevid's lucky number.

'I am R7, the most trusted non-natural commander of Nonpareil Soldiery. I am directly instructed by our supreme commander Lord Nokoevid to not damage even one bit of this beautiful planet. We are here to make this planet Eritrea more prosperous as part of the Xorian Empire and not to destroy it. So you need no fear.'

'Thanks for the comfort, commander R7. I will wait for Jasop, then we can jointly understand how to proceed.'

Jasop, at that moment, came inside. He was also surprised by the courtesy favoured to him by the soldiers.

'Lord Jasop is also here.' R7 telepathized in a sympathetic tone. 'Please accept my hearty wishes to the two wonderful Melange.'

'I am a Fleshy.' Jasop retorted.

'Oh. Good to know.' R7 was polite.

'What you want from us?' Hick seemed a bit frustrated.

'Reparation. The damage caused to Xor needs to be paid by Mayo Corporation, and politically as Eritrea belongs to Xor, it shall be 409th Autonomous Territory.'

'What nonsense? We aint paying any reparation, and Eritrea is an independent planet. It will never accept the suzerainty of Xor.' Hick literally shouted.

'Ok, sir. Let the plebiscite decide that.' R7 responded.

'Plebiscite. What does that mean?'

'I guess you need to improve your vocabulary.' R7 was calm.

'I know the meaning. When you telepathize, you don't need vocabulary; we can read the mental thoughts.' Hick was now losing his cool.

R7 knew that. He was just condescending Hick.

'Ok. Good if you know about Plebiscite.'

'I want to know what is in your mind.'

'My soldiers are doing a census which would be complete anytime. Who so ever is right now in Eritrea, whether Fleshy, Melange, Namuh, Mag, Acquian, Angelan, Centaur or any other IP-2, life will be entitled to one vote each except the kids, seriously ill patients and artificial beings.

They will vote in twelve Kels time, i.e. in two Eritrean days. Till that time, our forces will keep the seizure outside Eritrea so that no one can come or leave Eritrea. They have seen your administration, and now they will see the administration of R7 for two days. Then they will decide whether they want Eritrea as part of Xor as an Autonomous Territory or they want the old rule. If they say the old rule, we will leave and take only the reparation from Mayo Corporation. Since you have not paid our dues, all the Mayo Corporation properties will be in our control, and Mayo Corporation will be declared bankrupt, and ultimately it would wound up.'

'What? How come you charge such huge reparation only from Mayo Corporation?'

'Because your motto was—Eritrea is Mayo, and Mayo is Eritrea.'

Hick Nomar was shocked. It was the keynote of advertisement and PR, which were done to achieve business objectives. R7 was condescending, Hick.

Soon R7 was the administrator in charge. Soon he declared all the policies of the old administration as bad in law. Acquian were given full freedom in the Deep Ocean. R7 announced that Angelan Heptad would be re-established. More so, R7 revived the old faith, and those who wanted can convert back to their old religion were welcomed. A huge idol with black stone would be made in Angelan Heptad and the Deep Ocean.

Nokoevid had played his cards well. In one stroke, he had won the heart of local Eritreans and the Fleshy and Melange were ousted.

The plebiscite happened, and it seemed that entire Eritrea was ready to be part of the Xorian administration; even the Fleshy voted in favour. The Second Eritrean War, unlike the First, did not cause any devastation.

R7 was ecstatic. He, after the result, addressed the Eritrean population who, in almost unanimity, voted a local leader—an Angelan as Governor.

'This is a watershed event in the history of Eritrea. The entire planet has never been under the control of a single administrator who has the backing of the Xorian administrator as well as popular with the populace. I believe that in the coming time, Eritrea will be the hub of the Xorian Empire. It would be a brilliant centre of business, and will definitely achieve its potential. However, now it is time to rejig the old traditions. Eritrea will now be divided into four zones.'

'First, Angelan Zone, where we are going to rebuild the great Angelan Heptad that will consist primarily of Angelan, will have its own leaders who will be elected soon by them. Centaur Zone consists mostly of Centaurs, and

given that their population has decreased tremendously in the past period, we shall soon arrange for a special package for Centaurs; our target is to ensure that Centaurs soon double and then quadruple. Acquian zone where only Acquian shall be there as it would be built in Deep Ocean. Then there shall be a Central Zone, which shall have administrative rights in general over the entire planet and specifically to all areas not part of the first three zones. Central Zone shall comprise all IP-2 life and races, whether Angelan, Centaurs or Fleshy. This will not have its own leader but will be controlled by the Governor of Eritrea, who shall be elected by the entire planet. The elections shall be supervised by a permanent Eritrean Election Commission (EEC). I believe after a long time, a local Angelan has become the overall in charge of Eritrean territory. Soon EEC will ensure that elections in Angelan, Centaur and in Deep Ocean take place so that you have able and responsible administrators to take care of public administration. Our Supreme Commander Nokoevid will come soon to inaugurate a sophisticated scientific research institute, his dream child. It will research IDL travel. He believes with the right uses of Quaintium energies, even the three dimension being can do the IDL travel, which has a max speed of 288 Tylight. For this, the best part is Nokoevid is going to recruit the top brains of this very planet. Eritrea means a planet full of potential, and soon you will see the local Eritrean will be more prosperous than ever.'

R7 speech and their behaviour impressed almost everyone except those in power. Nokoevid had been a master tactician. He had captured an entire planet in such a fashion that the local in-bred, instead of hating him, were eulogizing his army.



'I don't understand. It seems that Eritreans loved the Xorian rule. But I am told that they are suffering.' Dharma was confused.

'Those questions you need to figure out on your own. You asked me to help you understand the second Eritrean war; I showed you as it unfolded. Though I know we have covered a huge period in a jiffy, then you got the drift.' Sona responded.

Soon the cube started radiating too much light, and it dazzled Dharma. Soon, he found himself back where he and Sona started.

'Now is the time to part ways with you.' Sona telepathized with a heavy tone.

'But seriously, I can't thank you enough. Believe me, I found it as if I had a true friend or supporter. You have been wonderful.' Dharma hugged Sona tightly.

'I don't know why, but it was a pleasure being with you. And we don't make any trade without consideration. So I got to know about my research on such a wonderful being. The son of God, and in return, I quenched your thirst to know about the second Eritrean war.'

'Thanks again. Now I need one more favour from you. Can you send me back to where my friends are?'

'I don't know about your friends, but I can send you back anywhere. If you want, I can take you back to the place where we met.'

'No. Then send me to Eritrea, if possible.'

'Why not? In a seven-dimensional world, it has a different coordinate. But I will directly transship you to Eritrea, and the best part is that no one will ever come to know about it also.'

'Thanks a lot. And where is the resonator.'

'Here. Take this.'

It was a small ring-shaped material, which Sona gave to Dharma. It has some peculiar depiction on it, and it seems to be made of some strange material. The ring Dharma took just got vanished.

'Where did it go?' Dharma was mesmerised.

'Nowhere. It is now imbibed in your body. You can say that you are now wearing it. You can contact me just by thinking. The resonator will get activated. It will connect you to me. We will be connected.'

'These are strange instruments, but I am getting the hang of them.'

'You are the son of God. The all-powerful creature in the three-dimensional world.'

'Haha. You also know how to be sarcastic.'

Sona hugged Dharma tightly and gave a kiss to him on his forehead. Soon Sona disappeared into a thin area.

'I have now taken shape in my seven-dimensional self. So you cannot fathom me. Now close your eyes. You will now be in Eritrea. You have to communicate through mental waves. Eritreans now communicate in mental waves.'

'Thanks for everything, Sona.'

'And remember Dharma, you son of God, you have the most powerful weapon of all.'

'I don't have it yet. I am to forge it with Prof. Boro. The Quaintium energies are yet to be worked on.'

Dharma can feel Sona's giggling a bit. She telepathized, 'No, my son of God, the Child of Two Worlds, you already possess the most potent weapon of all.'

Dharma went into thought. 'I didn't understand.'

Dharma soon found himself in a trance, floating freely with radiant light all around, and the last words of Sona reverberated in his mind.

'The legend is a powerful weapon. Maybe the most potent one. You can defeat anyone with this weapon. You don't need any other. This is what Boro might be referring to.'

Dharma soon finds himself in the street of Eritrea. He had no idea where he was. But before he could realize anything, a speeding Blackrock hit him. Good for Dharma, the impact was not huge, but it was still enough to render him unconscious.

***

## END OF BOOK ONE OF THE SAGAS UNTOLD

## ANNEXURE 1

# Glossary

| | |
|---|---|
| Acquian | Half human, half fish race of Eritrea. They live in the Deep Ocean. They can come to the surface and, at that time, have the ability to convert their tail to legs but can't survive long on the land. |
| Acrimea | The area primarily resided by Acrimean. |
| Acrimean | A type of Namuh of Xor. |
| AGI | Artificially General Intelligence are those machines or robots which are humanoid in shape and are as good as humans in intellect and behaviour. |
| Angelan | Human-looking species. Have four hands and wings that give them flight. |
| Anion Ships | Spaceship developed by the Xorian civilization uses the Quanion Super space way and can achieve Tylight speeds.<br>Anion Prime 1 = 2 Tylight speed<br>Anion Prime 2 = 4 Tylight speed<br>Anion Prime 3 = 16 Tylight speed<br>Anion Prime 4 = 28.8 Tylight speed |
| Antium | The material Industrium is called Antium by Xorians and black stone by Eritreans. |
| Ausulvania | The area primarily resided by Ausulvanian. |
| Ausulvanian | A type of Namuh of Xor. |
| Blackrock | A sophisticated vehicle that was used to drive in any terrain. These are used in advanced planets such as Xor and Eritrea for surface transport. These are extremely costly, and only the uber-rich can afford them. |
| Bof | Book of Faith. The religious book is followed by Fleshy. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Bomini | Cosmic Vehicle used by Nokoevid for travelling across Muverse |
| Boro | The rebel who wanted to uproot Nokoevid's evil rule. |
| Centaur | The half-human, half-horse race of Eritrea. |
| Dharma | The protagonist of the story. The Child of Two Worlds. He has the task cut out to defeat the mighty Nokoevid. |
| Dias | A cyborg who was the in-charge of spies in Nokoevid's administration. |
| Eritrea | The planet that was captured by Nokoevid. |
| Eritrea – Political Divisions - Before the First Eritrean War – Seven Provincial Governments of Heous | Alpha Heptad – the biggest provincial government having a political boundary over 40% of the Heous area. Beta Heptad – the second biggest provincial government having political boundaries over 30% of the Heous area. Both Alpha and Beta Heptad collectively are called Angelan Heptad. They consist of the majority of the Angelan population. Centauri-land is the third biggest provincial government having a political boundary over 20% of the Heous area. It has the majority of Centaurs. Vari, which has the majority of Acquian and is a sea state, Olga and Mystify, which has a mixed population of Angelan, Centaur and Fleshy, all constitute 10% of the Heous area. Lux Fulgor has been given space in the far, deep south of the continent of Heous. Lux Fulgor is a country for Fleshy. |
| Fleshy | Similar to humans of the Earth who live in Eritrea. They believe in Bof. |
| Greenland | A large continent of Eritrea where animal kind and the evolved species live together. |
| Heous | The large continent of Eritrea, where political territories are marked. Technologically and economically more advanced area than Green Land. |
| HTM Ships | Nifty or Cosmic Vessels uses Hyperbole Tachyon Momenta technology, whereby hyperbole is created in space by the interaction of two oppositely charged tachyons.<br>HTM Ships 1 – 1 Tylight speed<br>HTM Ships 2 – 2 Tylight speed<br>HTM Ships 3 – 2.8 Tylight speed<br>HTM Ships 4 – 3 Tylight speed |
| Hulloy Speed | Equivalent to 25 times Tylight Speed, i.e., 62,500 times light speed. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Indpro | Industrium Propeller – the warp drive engine driven space shuttles manufactured by Merkel that used to travel at 100 times the speed of light. |
| Industrium | The material that helps to provide the requisite energy for straining the space-time fabric that would help in propelling Indpro beyond the speed of light. |
| Intelli Perimeter | Parameters on which life forms are classified by Tymex:<br>IP-0 – Non-living beings. (all planets, moons, asteroids etc., which don't host life – e.g. Khart moon of Nadus)<br>IP 1 – Life forms /living species which do not cross the ambition threshold<br>IP 2 – Living being which crossed the ambition threshold but are intra-planetary civilization (planet Nadus)<br>IP 3 – Interstellar life forms (Earth comparison a Type II civilization on Kardashev scale) – Xorian, Merkels Eritrean and Mishian<br>IP 4 – Life forms which are far above IP3, they are nearly invincible (Thyzer and Ether fall here)<br>IP 5 – Life forms that could traverse beyond dimensions can mould time. Almost God-like.<br>IP 6 – Races which are beyond imagination. Those who may have created time and energy themselves. The Gods.<br>IP 7 – God of Gods. |
| Janak290 | Cosmic Vehicle – which got Dharma from Earth to Muverse |
| Kel | A Tymex measure of time roughly translates to 2 ⅓ Earth days. |
| Lady Tara | Supporter of Boro and profess to be the sister of Dharma. She is Fleshy by race. |
| Lauy Speed | Equivalent to 25 times Hulloy Speed, i.e.,1,562,500 times light speed. |
| Mag | The technological and evolutionary backward race of Xor. |
| Magmu | The mixed race between Mag and Namuh of Xor. |
| Mazol | A planet where Boro has started his rebellion. |
| Merkel | Evolved species, golden skin coloured human type, who rule over the Merkel realm. |
| Mylight | A Tymex measure of cosmic distance, which roughly translates to 37,844 billion km |
| Nadri Land | The area primarily resided by Nadriman. |
| Nadriman | A type of Namuh of Xor. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Namuh | The technological and evolutionary superior race of Xor. They look similar to humans of Earth or Fleshy of Eritrea. |
| Nifty | Any Cosmic Vessel which can achieve more than Tylight speed. |
| Nokoevid | The all-powerful, extremely intelligent and shrewd emperor of the vast Xorian Empire. Possess the weapon Qued. |
| Qued | The weapon is so powerful that it can destroy the entire Galaxy. Only Nokoevid possesses it and knows how to use it. |
| Savitra65 | These are Stargaze Speed space vehicles which could attain 60% of light speed. |
| Stargaze Speed | The speed is equivalent to 60% of light speed. |
| Super-luminal travel mechanism | A way of achieving more than light speed for mass and massless travel. |
| The City | It is the name given to a cluster of various space cities floating and part of the Xorian Empire. |
| Thyzer | Evolved species that could transfer their spirit to any living or inanimate object. |
| Time Bubble Wrap | A cover/shell which prevents the on-boarders of the FTL ship from any damage due to the force generated due to super-luminal travel. The time paradox was addressed through a universal Tymex time. It would always be 1 Kel, howsoever you count. Because the time was dynamic and not localized. |
| Tyc | Tymex Currency. The mental command can be given to transfer currency from one's account to another. Tymex monitors it and is purely anonymous and untraceable. |
| Tylight speed | 4 Mylight per Kel as per Tymex measure. A cosmic Vessel's speed is roughly equivalent to 2500 times light speed. |
| Tymex | A central entity presided over by a Thyzer, with a representative of the Merkel realm and Xorian Empire. Tymex decided on all important issues in the Fran galaxy. |
| Tymex Date | 332 Tymilloy, 12 Lauy, 2 Hulloy, 13 Tymex, 13 Tym, 8 Mex years means 12,987,658,832 Earth years since the formation of the Fran galaxy. After every 4 Earth years' time, it will change to 332/12/2/13/13/9.<br>\|12\|14\|16:19:7:0 means 12 Franc, 14 Kel, 16 Ahom, 19 Pal, 7 Minor and 0 Sim. It is called the Nano date, and the period between two Mex, i.e., between two 4 years Earth standard period, is monitored through Nano date. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Tymilloy Speed | Equivalent to 25 times Lauy Speed, i.e., 39,062,500 times light speed. |
| UMH (umh) | Equivalent to 10000 km in 2 Earth hours. (10000 um per ahom) |
| Vish | 5 million Gigajoules of energy devastation as per Earth standards. That is equivalent to the destruction caused by a bomb with 500 Kiloton of TNT. |
| Xor | The mother planet from where the Xorian Empire started. |
| Zoro | Servant of Boro and Dharma. |

**Galactic Time:** Tymex, Tym, Mex, Franc etc., are Galactic times in Fran galaxy. When it is said that one Tymex lapses, it will translate into one Tymex anywhere and everywhere. The equivalence to Earth time is given for ease of understanding.

**Conversion of Galactic time to Earth time:**

| Tymex Measure | Equivalent Earth Time (approx..) |
|---|---|
| Sim | ½ Earth seconds |
| Minor | 13 Earth seconds |
| Pal | 5 Earth minutes |
| Ahom | 2 Earth hours |
| Kel | 2⅓ Earth days /56 Earth hours |
| Franc | 58 Earth days |
| Mex | 4 Earth years |
| Tym | 100 Earth years |
| Tymex | 2500 Earth years |

Note: Tymex measures are dynamic. The time itself modifies the basis of the spatial dimension it is.

**Other Time comparisons**

One Eritrean Year = 12 Earth Years = 3 Mex

1 Eritrean day = 6 Earth days

**Galactic Distances:**

Distances are dynamic too. Earth equivalent is given for ease of understanding.

| Tymex Measures | Earth Equivalent |
|---|---|
| 1 Tylight – 25 Tymlight | 2500 light-years distance |
| 1 Tymlight = 25 Mylight | 100 light-years distance |
| 1 Mylight = 25 Heaurs or 1000 Hu | 4 light-years distance |
| 1 Heaur = 1000 Myt | 1.513 trillion km |
| 1 Hu = 1000 Khu | 37844 million km |
| 1 Khu = 1000 Fori | 37,844,000 km |
| 1 Fori | 37844 km |
| 1 Myt | 1.5 billion km |
| 1 Lukum = 1000 Luk | 1 million km |
| 1 Luk = 1000 um | 1000 km |
| 1 um | 1 km |

**Tymex Speeds:**

| Tymex Measures of Speed | Speed in Tymex | Speed in Earth standard (approx..) |
|---|---|---|
| Tylight Speed | 4 mylight per kel | 2500 times light speed – 2500C |
| Stargaze speed | Myt per Ahom | 648 million km per hour – 0.60C |

## ANNEXURE 2

# Super Luminal Travel Modes in Muverse

**Technical Details of Superluminal Travel**

| Mass-less Travel | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Medium** | **Description** | **Speed in Tylight (Speed in multiples of light speed)** |
| *Arepo* Waves (Lauy Speed) | These are similar to Radio waves, but they cannot contain any mass and are merely helpful for transmitting signals. They help in establishing connections between two distant places through *Arepo* Communication Transponders or ACTs. They have dual properties and are both like photons and electromagnetic waves. They are helpful in establishing a connection. But these are open signals and can be received by any ACT. Also, these can be interrupted by the presence of massive black holes or quasars or other super substances. | 625 (1,562,500) |
| *Pure* Signals (Super Hulloy speed) | These are also similar to *Arepo* waves, but they cannot be used in transmitting or receiving signals. They can merely connect two Transponders, but no signals can pass through them. They are used by Spies to ensure that two points are connected, and they can receive coordinate with each other. | 300 (750,000) |

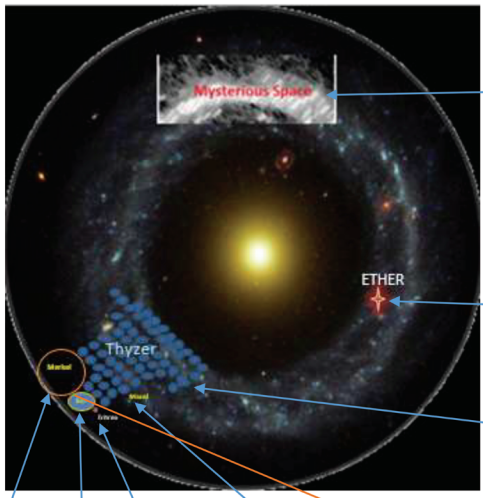
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stealth (Hulloy Speed) | These are used by spies to send encrypted signals. They are similar to electromagnetic waves but transmit signals at very high speeds. | 25 (62,500) |
| *Zeacon* Waves (1 Tylight Speed) | These are beams or waves which connect to Life Beaming Transponders and can beam any living or non-living being from one place to another at a max distance of 1 Heaur (1.5 Trillion KM) at 1 Tylight speed. | 1 (2500) |
| **With Mass Travel** | | |
| **Medium** | **Description** | **Speed in Tylight (Speed in multiples of light speed)** |
| Anion Ships | These ships use Quanion super space way, which repels each other and uses Lequaff to channelize the energy for the purpose of the ship. Useful for mega warships. Big space vessels. Further, The travel happens in a Time Bubble wrap which is to be created and an energy revolver which is created from the material 'Maen' that allows the material to revolve in a circle and with every rotation, the energy is doubled. So, if the initial 100 joules energy is created, it is revolved over Maen, then with the first rotation, it becomes 100^2 jules, and in the second rotation, it becomes 100^2^2. Thus, in a few rotations over the Maen circle, the energy becomes huge. That propels and creates a Time Bubble wrap. | 28.8 (72,000) |
| Param Mann - Mass Dissembler | Thyzerian developed this recently where any mass converted into energy by Paras element, and then it would be transported at super-luminal speed, and at destination Mann would reconvert the energy into the mass. Paras – Mann would remember the configuration of mass, and thus the conversion and reconversion from energy / mass would be maintained. | 156 (390,000) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Radiant Coil - Warp Drive | A huge string was created, which could strain space-time and thereby could push the spaceship from one point to another. The spaceship would travel slower than light speed, but the coil would strain the space-time so that the distance covered by the ship would be much more, and it would appear the ship had traversed at super-luminal speed. | 80 (200,000) |
| Wormhole Travel | Merkels use naturally traversable Wormhole techniques whereby they can identify these hidden wormhole that have existed in the galaxy since the beginning. Merkels have identified them and traversed across faster. But this is only possible where wormholes connect. | Undefined |
| Inter-Dimensional Lasagne (IDL) | Only available with Ether. An exotic material called IDL is used to create a huge catapult which gives a thrust so that the mass is pushed to the 7th Dimension, and from there, it travels and reaches a certain point and is pushed back to the 3rd Dimension. For the 3D observer, a huge distance is covered in a very short time. But the higher the mass, the huge amount of IDL is required. | 288 (720,000) |
| Hyperbola Tachyon Momenta | Here a hyperbola is formed when two oppositely charged tachyons with opposite momenta (same magnitude, opposite sign) are reacted within the Maen Circle, and this allows infinite energy for propulsion. This can push the speed beyond light speed. Time Bubble Wrap needs to be created. | 3 (7500) |
| Vehemance Gateways | A space-elevator which connects two distinct celestial bodies. These are super-luminal tunnels made up of anti-matter. This anti-matter allows antifriction travel whereby the speed is gained higher than the light of speed. | 0.5 (1250) |

## ANNEXURE 3

# Fran Galaxy Map

Vision received by Dharma when Tara telepathized to him.




**Mysterious Space**

**A space of which no information is Available. All probes have failed. Mighty Thyzer too couldn't penetrate it.**

**Ether**
**7 Dimensional super creatures live here. To 3 D world they are God like. No further Information available about them.**

**Thyzer**

**They are individual super intelligent civilization who can transfer their consciousness into powerful disc and roam across galalxy. The area where majority of them are present in Fran Galaxy is demarcated through blue disc.**

**Merkel Uniform golden race. ~ 376 sq. Tym. in area**

**Eritrea Sole planetary Civilization**

**With 4 intelligent life.**

**Mazol Sole planetary Civilization.**

**Tymex (Its HQ situated at boundary of Xorian and Merkel Empire.**

**Intra-galactic body created by Thyzer, Merkel and Xor for cooperation between three most intelligent Empire of Fran Galaxy.**

**Xor**

**Inter-planetary**

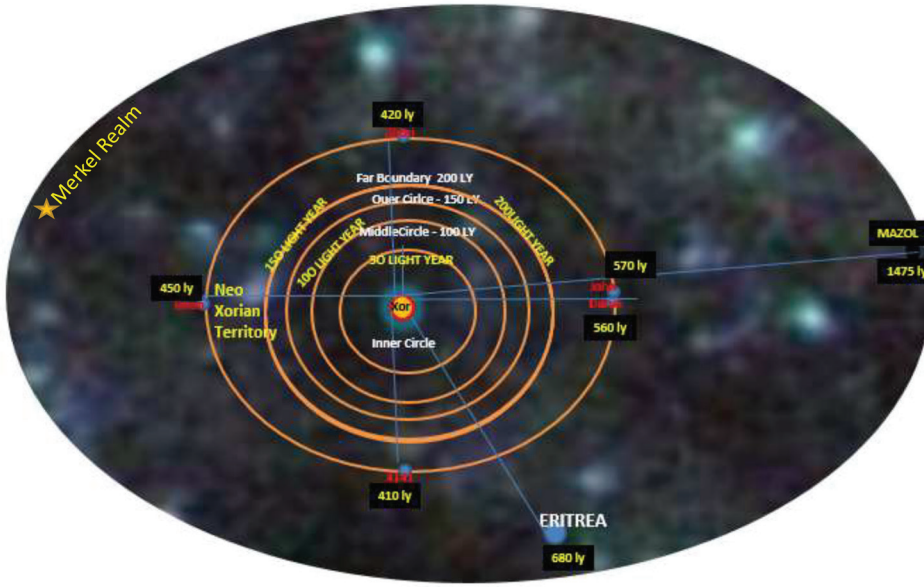
**Civilization with 410 celestial bodies under its suzerainty. ~ 68 sq.Tym in area. Fifty Six intelligent lives, are within its ambit. Governed as a federation with strong center Xor.**

Sq. Tym= 10,000 sq. light years (earth standard).
**Area:**
**Merkel:** 376.1703 Tym Sq. (3,761,703 sq. light years earth standard)
**Xor**: 67.80629 Tym Sq.( 678063 sq. light years earth standard)

## ANNEXURE 4

# Xorian Empire Map

Distances are depicted in Lightyear (LY) for ease of understanding.




Not to scale.

**Xorian Empire**

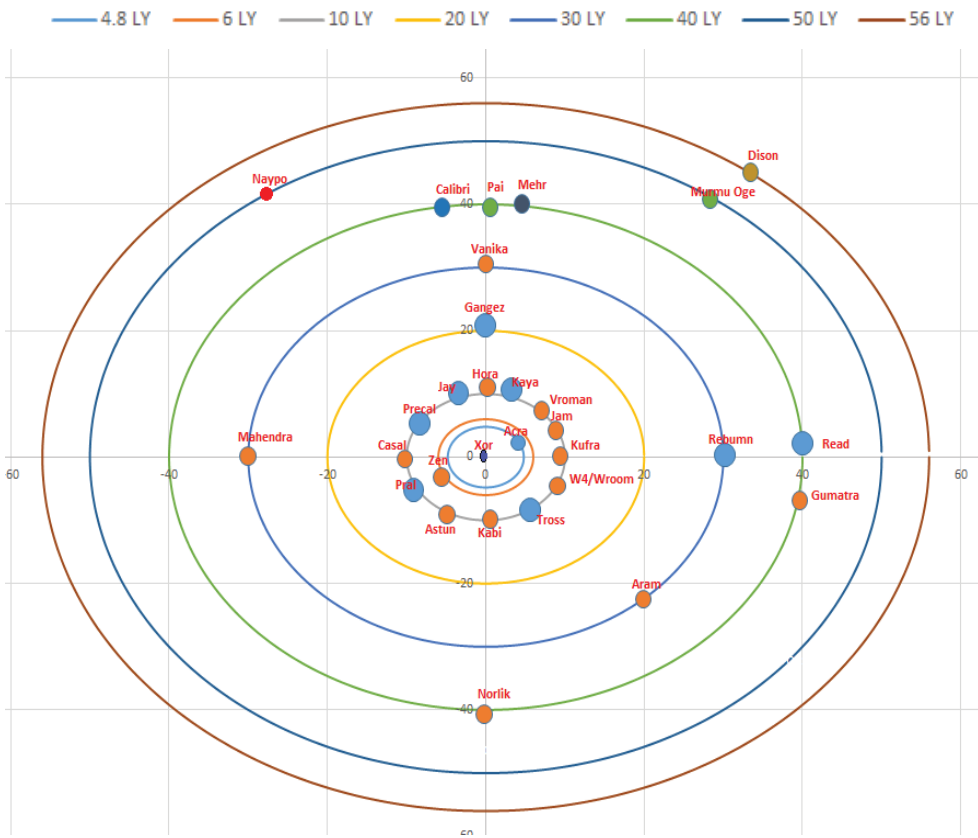
| Distance from Xor mother planet | | Region | Celestial bodies hosting intelligent IP2 life | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tymex Light Years (LY) | | | Number of Planets | Number of Moons | Asteroids | Space Cities | |
| 2.5 Mylight | 10 LY | Core Inner | 32 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 45 |
| 6 Mylight | 10-25 LY | Mid-Inner | 27 | 43 | 3 | 0 | 73 |

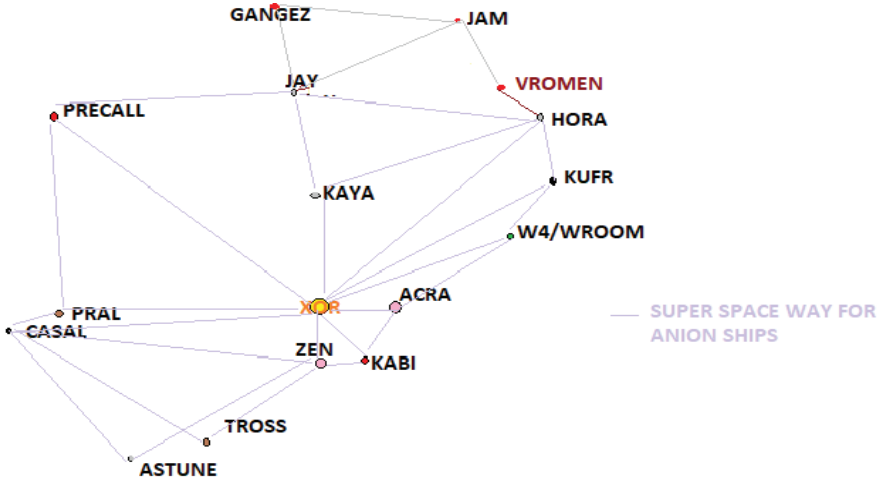
| **Distance from Xor mother planet** | | **Region** | **Celestial bodies hosting intelligent IP2 life** | | | | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Tymex Light Years (LY)** | | | **Number of Planets** | **Number of Moons** | **Asteroids** | **Space Cities** | |
| 12.5 Mylight | 25-50 LY | Inner Circle | 62 | 35 | 0 | 0 | 97 |
| 18.5 Mylight | 50LY-75 LY | Middle Zone | 13 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 29 |
| 25 Mylight | 75 LY – 100 LY | Middle Circle | 61 | 24 | 2 | 24 | 111 |
| 37.5 Mylight | 100 LY – 150 LY | Outer Circle | 2 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| 50 Mylight | 150 LY – 200 LY | Far Boundary | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 |
| 50 Mylight + | 200 LY + | Neo Xorian | 22 | 15 | 7 | 0 | 44 |
| | | Total | 223 | 150 | 13 | 24 | 410* |

* Includes Shai – of mother planet Xor. Which was recently declared by Tymex to be an independent territory and not part of the Xorian Empire. Eritrea, thus officially, was the 409th Xorian territory.

## ANNEXURE 5

# Xorian Inner Core – Map

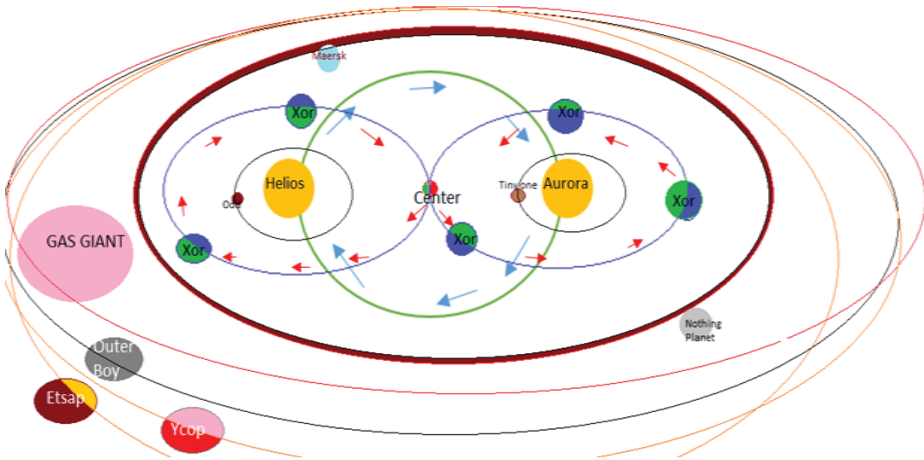





**XORIAN INNER MOST CIRCLE - THE CORE**
**5 MYLIGHT - 20 LIGHT YEARS FROM XORIAN MOTHER PLANET**

## ANNEXURE 6

# Xorian Solar System – Map




| Planet | Radius approx. in KM | Average distance between Suns in km | No. of Moons | Type of Revolution | Whether tidally locked |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Odd | 2400 | 150 million km from Helios | 0 | S type only revolves around Helios | Yes |
| Tiny one | 3600 | 150 million km from Aurora | 0 | S type only revolves around Aurora | Yes |
| Xor | 6400 | Habitable Zone - 648 million km from both Helios and Aurora. Helios and Aurora are F0-type stars, and their habitable zone is 600 to 750 million km. | 1 (Shai) | Type 8. A unique revolution where Xor revolves around Helios and Aurora making an orbital shape of horizontal 8. | No |

| Planet | Radius approx. in KM | Average distance between Suns in km | No. of Moons | Type of Revolution | Whether tidally locked |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Maersk | 6200 | 750 million from the centre of both Suns | 2 (Mae & Skon) | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| Asteroid Belt between Maersk and Nadus | 5 million km thick | 750 -800 million from the centre of both Suns | | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| Nadus (aka Nothing Planet) | 6100 | 850 million km from the centre of both Suns | 1 (Khart) | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| Giant Gas | 72000 | 2 billion km from the Center | 120 | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| When Dharma had entered Muverse, Ahsi, Ardin, Nawap Nurav, Tawaria, and Aversh were the moons of Giant Gas which were terraformed and hosting a thriving civilization. The Governors of these moons were part of the Governing Council. | | | | | |
| Outer Boy | 58500 | 2.5 billion km from centre | 56 | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| When Dharma had entered Muverse, Aidni, Ivish, Anich, and Sur were the moons of Outer Boy, which were terraformed and hosting a thriving civilization. The Governors of these moons were part of the Governing Council. Nokoevid and his father, Ralf, both belonged to the moon Ivish of Outer Boy, where they held the post of Governor before becoming Supreme Commander of the Xoiran Empire. | | | | | |
| Etsap | 34000 | 5 billion km from the Center | 12 (none terraformed) | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |
| Ypoc | 29000 | 7.5 billion km from the Center | 8 (none terraformed) | P-type revolves around both stars. | No |

## ANNEXURE 7

# Xorian Empire – Various Race

There are around 56 races in Xorian Empire. Some of them are described hereunder.

| Xorian Empire – Race | Description | Comparison to humans on Earth |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Acrimean Namuh | Humanoid race, average height around 5 feet 8 inches. Square or oval face, fair-skinned, broad forehead, firm jawline, double eyelid, and mostly sharp features. | Similar to humans. |
| 2. Ausulvanian Namuh | Humanoid race. Taller than Acrimean. Slightly brownish skin colour, broad forehead, muscularly toned body. | Similar to humans. |
| 3. Nadriman Namuh | Humanoids race shorter in height than the typical Acrimean and have fair skin, monolid eyes, and broad foreheads. | Similar to humans. |
| 4. Mag | Sophisticated ape-men with long, low skulls (compared to the more globular skull of Namuh) with a characteristically prominent brow ridge above their eyes, and the central part of the face protruded forward, being dominated by a wide nose. | Homo-Neanderthals may evolve to Mag. |
| 5. Magmu | Cross-breed between Namuh and Mag may have features of both races. | Humans and evolved Ape cross breed – hypothetically. |

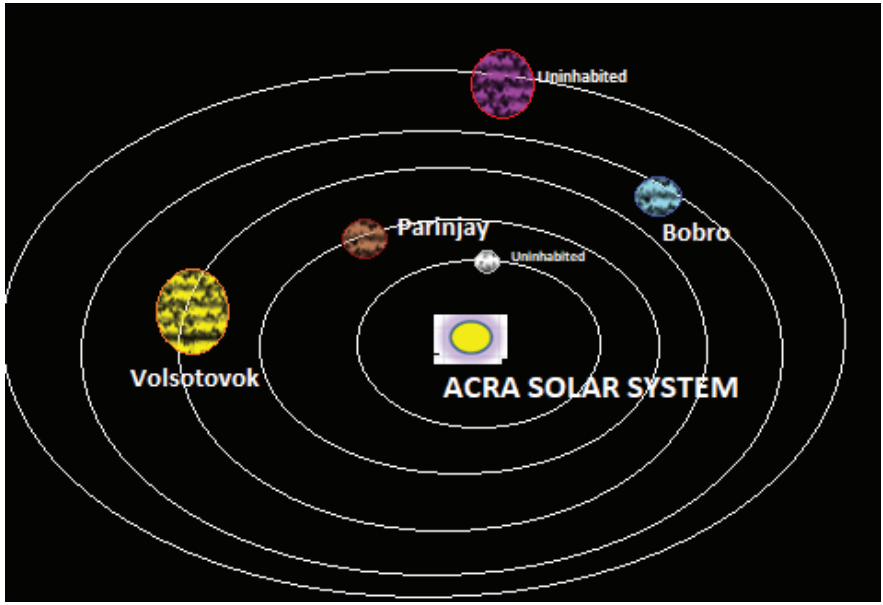
| **Xorian Empire – Race** | **Description** | **Comparison to humans on Earth** |
|---|---|---|
| 6. Angelans | Humanoid race. Tall, fair complexioned and have evolved avifauna. They had four hands and wings to fly. The two hands and wings would collapse so as to not be visible generally. | Human type with two extra hands and wings. However, when the extra hands and wings are collapsed in exo-skeletal, they look like humans. |
| 7. Fleshy | Similar to humans. Tender skin. | Extremely similar. |
| 8. Centaurs | Half human half horse, extremely agile and short-tempered race. | The half-human type is similar to the human face. The intellect level and ability to comprehend are similar to humans. |
| 9. Acquians | Half human, half fish. The skin was tough, and below the waist area, they were like fishes. Many were giant aquatic creatures though few were too small.<br>Acquians can stroll on land, and at that time, they have the ability to convert their tail into legs. | Typical Acquian was taller and more muscular than most humans. |
| 10. Hum | Hum, the aboriginal of planet John. They are short-height frog-shaped faces with protruding eyestalks and two tentacles for olfaction. They have cinder legs. The Female Hum are known for their olfactory senses; legend says they can even sense danger. Hum is known for secretarial services across Xor. They are very good assistants. They are loyal and committed to their master. Although timid. An average Hum lives a life equivalent to 2.5 to 3 Tym, i.e. 250-300 Earth Years or 200 to 240 John years. | Like humans, Hum also has carbon-based life forms. |

| **Xorian Empire – Race** | **Description** | **Comparison to humans on Earth** |
|---|---|---|
| 11. Garliquian | Tall humanoid race with facial features of a large triangular-shaped face, meeting of both eyebrows at the bridge of the nose, deep penetrating teeth, strong jaw, curved fingernails, low set ears and walking with swinging stride.<br>Garliquians have three genders. Male, Female and Bipolar. Bipolar can have sex with either Males or Females. They can change their physique to either Male or Female at will. Their hormones are such that they allow them this. They can bear children also. But in the last trimester, they have to necessarily remain in female form as the hormone doesn't allow them to change till the kid is born. | Dharma, in his vision, equated them to the werewolf of the fabled Earth; however, Garliquian in the real world were different. They had wolf-like faces but hugely different make and features. |
| 12. Rar | Namuh with hardened skin and a generally dark-coloured complexion. | Humans with dark skin tones, however extremely hard skin, unlike a human. |
| 13. Merkel | Human-like species. Golden colour skin, tender skin, generally five feet 7 inches to five feet 8 inches tall. The Merkel females were extremely good-looking with sharp features. The light golden skin tone made them look like a fairy from heaven. | Fictional fairies. |
| 14. Melange | Mixed breed between Namuh and Merkel and have features of the two races. | Humans, though they may differ in skin tone. Average Melange was more intelligent than average Namuh, Merkel or Humans on Earth. |

| **Xorian Empire – Race** | **Description** | **Comparison to humans on Earth** |
|---|---|---|
| 15. Muksa | Thin humanoid race which has green colour skin tone. They could stretch their body to a large extent. Sometimes this helped them to pass through the narrow cell. | Humans like, however, the ability to stretch to a larger extent. Generally, the intellect level is far lesser than the average human. Muksa is not part of the Xorian Empire Races; primarily, they are at Mazol, which hosts an independent planetary civilization. |

## ANNEXURE 8

# Acra Solar System



# CHILD OF TWO WORLDS

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**Dharma** – a young man in his mid-twenties was shoved to a parallel universe, beamed from one place to other, overwhelmed by incomprehensible super-luminal travel and on top of it rendezvous with a seven-dimensional being. But the strangest of all, he – a lowly human – was expected to defeat Nokoevid - the most intellectual and powerful villain of the parallel universe; can he come out of his shadows of fear to overcome a feat almost impossible.

A story of a young boy's journey of traversing through the web of complexities; learning the rise of the mighty Xorian Empire and the two wars between the mighty Xor and Eritrea. Eritrea ultimately lost and its only hope is a human who was shoved to parallel universe who was prophesied to be their saviour.

**Dr. Nisha Shastry** is a Ph.D in public administration and has over twenty years of experience in administration. She at present is Executive Director of an IT company however she is a science fiction enthusiast.

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